


Sheridan Baker

The Essayist





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The Practical Stylist

The Essayist

Sheridan Baker

U N I V E R S I T Y O F M I C H I G A N

Thomas Y. Crowell Company N E W Y O R K

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To Buffy, Libby, & Bill

Preface

THESE ESSAYS take the student progressively through the questions of expository writing. They illustrate how a thesis may organize his points at a stroke, how a structure is built, how the paragraph, the sentence, and the word may work their various wiles. They include the autobiographical essay and, since nothing so tunes our linguistic precision, the ironic—and specimens of how *not* to write. I conclude with some examples of variety in evidence and the author's voice, and some recommendations for research. Readers of *The Practical Stylist* will recognize the rhetorical approach.

Although I make frequent suggestions for reading the selections, everything is steadily kept to the one practical point: how to write an essay. Each of the eleven sections takes up a rhetorical problem and holds to it until the end, forgoing for the moment other targets of opportunity. To keep the aim sharp, I show the student in a general way what to look for as he begins each section; and at the end, instead of the usual "questions for study," I suggest ways for applying in his own writing the principles he has just seen demonstrated. To talk thus primarily about writing—how this essay was put together, how the student might put one together himself—relieves the teacher most blessedly from being sociologist, psychologist, anthropologist, and seer; and it actually seems to teach the student how to write. Not that I see reading only as grist for the writer's mill. Talk about the writing, and the ideas emerge—and the big questions of meaning and truth as well.

You will notice that the essays tend to be concerned with books,

to be written by men and women who have loved books. "You can never be wise unless you love reading," said Dr. Johnson; and he might have added, "nor can you learn to write well." The first and last essays, indeed, show how marvelously the literate mind can respond to thought and experience. I include a number of classics of the classroom (my debt to previous anthologists is perhaps all too evident) partly because they have taught well, but mostly because they are valuable. The thoughts of a Thoreau, for example, or a Schweitzer, go deep enough for a lifetime. Like White, I believe that every student in the universe should know Thoreau; he once gave me a permanent turn, too, and I think I have learned more about writing from him than from anyone.

Which brings me to my final point. In an age that preaches a keeping up with the linguistic Joneses, the student needs help from outside. He will learn nothing from the herd but to go along; he needs to see the virtues in other voices and other times. By worrying over the gristle in a Thoreau, he may perhaps discover how to give today's very different idiom an occasional blessing of fiber and fire. Consequently, I have sought a wide variety of excellence in the readings, and urged exercises imitating complex styles. And though I have tried to stick to the rhetorical point, I have nevertheless also sought a certain clash of idea and subject, from essay to essay, to stir up the sediment of language and idea both, and to leave the student something to sift for his own essay of the week.

There are twenty-two complete essays—more than enough for close study in any one semester—and illustrations from fifteen other authors as well. Yet I believe the book compact enough for the student to use and study without having to carry it back to market at the semester's end four-fifths unread.

The essays are reproduced exactly as they appeared originally, except that obvious typographical spelling errors have been corrected, all book titles italicized, and some minor styling inconsistencies changed.

S. B.

Ann Arbor, Michigan
November, 1962

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The Essayist

1 / Thesis:

The Argumentative Edge

How Should One Read a Book? • VIRGINIA WOOLF

A Primer of Existentialism • GORDON E. BIGELOW

THESE TWO ESSAYS might be called direct “exposition”—a simple laying out of the subject for all to view. Actually, neither is so direct nor so simple. Each writer has gone beyond mere description to say something specific *about* his subject. Believing something about his subject that he wants you also to believe—a proposition to be proved, a thesis—each writer has in fact written something like a proposal instead of a mere explanation. Each has given his subject a slight edge of argument, and with it a sense of direction, of interesting purpose.

Mrs. Woolf’s essay is slightly more edged than Mr. Bigelow’s. Her belief about how one should *read* is closer to argument than is Mr. Bigelow’s belief about the significance of existentialism. And yet Mrs. Woolf’s belief, her thesis, is not so clearly stated nor so easily grasped: her polite intelligence keeps her from forcing the edge of her argument at us, and makes her essay seem more purely expository than it is. Ask yourself, as you read, what her central thesis is, and find her own clearest statement of it.

Mr. Bigelow’s essay is about as direct an exposition as one will find. He is simply defining and clarifying a concept. But notice how

he too presents an argumentative edge, saying in effect: "This subject is important, yet imperfectly understood; you need to understand it to read the books of your times."

How Should One Read a Book?

VIRGINIA WOOLF

IN THE FIRST PLACE, I want to emphasise the note of interrogation at the end of my title. Even if I could answer the question for myself, the answer would apply only to me and not to you. The only advice, indeed, that one person can give another about reading is to take no advice, to follow your own instincts, to use your own reason, to come to your own conclusions. If this is agreed between us, then I feel at liberty to put forward a few ideas and suggestions because you will not allow them to fetter that independence which is the most important quality that a reader can possess. After all, what laws can be laid down about books? The battle of Waterloo was certainly fought on a certain day; but is *Hamlet* a better play than *Lear*? Nobody can say. Each must decide that question for himself. To admit authorities, however heavily furred and gowned, into our libraries and let them tell us how to read, what to read, what value to place upon what we read, is to destroy the spirit of freedom which is the breath of those sanctuaries. Everywhere else we may be bound by laws and conventions—there we have none.

But to enjoy freedom, if the platitude is pardonable, we have of course to control ourselves. We must not squander our powers, helplessly and ignorantly, squirting half the house in order to water a single rose-bush; we must train them, exactly and powerfully, here on the very spot. This, it may be, is one of the first difficulties that faces us in a library. What is "the very spot"? There may well seem to be nothing but a conglomeration and huddle of confusion. Poems and novels, histories and memoirs, dictionaries and blue-books; books written in all languages by men and women of all tempers, races, and ages jostle each other on the shelf. And outside the donkey brays, the women gossip at the pump, the colts gallop across

the fields. Where are we to begin? How are we to bring order into this multitudinous chaos and so get the deepest and widest pleasure from what we read?

It is simple enough to say that since books have classes—fiction, biography, poetry—we should separate them and take from each what it is right that each should give us. Yet few people ask from books what books can give us. Most commonly we come to books with blurred and divided minds, asking of fiction that it shall be true, of poetry that it shall be false, of biography that it shall be flattering, of history that it shall enforce our own prejudices. If we could banish all such preconceptions when we read, that would be an admirable beginning. Do not dictate to your author; try to become him. Be his fellow-worker and accomplice. If you hang back, and reserve and criticise at first, you are preventing yourself from getting the fullest possible value from what you read. But if you open your mind as widely as possible, then signs and hints of almost imperceptible fineness, from the twist and turn of the first sentences, will bring you into the presence of a human being unlike any other. Steep yourself in this, acquaint yourself with this, and soon you will find that your author is giving you, or attempting to give you, something far more definite. The thirty-two chapters of a novel—if we consider how to read a novel first—are an attempt to make something as formed and controlled as a building: but words are more impalpable than bricks; reading is a longer and more complicated process than seeing. Perhaps the quickest way to understand the elements of what a novelist is doing is not to read, but to write; to make your own experiment with the dangers and difficulties of words. Recall, then, some event that has left a distinct impression on you—how at the corner of the street, perhaps, you passed two people talking. A tree shook; an electric light danced; the tone of the talk was comic, but also tragic; a whole vision, an entire conception, seemed contained in that moment.

But when you attempt to reconstruct it in words, you will find that it breaks into a thousand conflicting impressions. Some must be subdued; others emphasized; in the process you will lose, probably, all grasp upon the emotion itself. Then turn from your blurred and littered pages to the opening pages of some great novelist—Defoe, Jane Austen, Hardy. Now you will be better able to appreciate their mastery. It is not merely that we are in the presence of a different person—Defoe, Jane Austen, or Thomas Hardy—but

that we are living in a different world. Here, in *Robinson Crusoe*, we are trudging a plain high road; one thing happens after another; the fact and the order of the fact is enough. But if the open air and adventure mean everything to Defoe they mean nothing to Jane Austen. Hers is the drawing-room, and people talking, and by the many mirrors of their talk revealing their characters. And if, when we have accustomed ourselves to the drawing-room and its reflections, we turn to Hardy, we are once more spun round. The moors are round us and the stars are above our heads. The other side of the mind is now exposed—the dark side that comes uppermost in solitude, not the light side that shows in company. Our relations are not towards people, but toward Nature and destiny. Yet different as these worlds are, each is consistent with itself. The maker of each is careful to observe the laws of his own perspective, and however great a strain they may put upon us they will never confuse us, as lesser writers so frequently do, by introducing two different kinds of reality into the same book. Thus to go from one great novelist to another—from Jane Austen to Hardy, from Peacock to Trollope, from Scott to Meredith—is to be wrenched and uprooted; to be thrown this way and then that. To read a novel is a difficult and complex art. You must be capable not only of great fineness of perception, but of great boldness of imagination if you are going to make use of all that the novelist—the great artist—gives you.

But a glance at the heterogeneous company on the shelf will show you that writers are very seldom “great artists”; far more often a book makes no claim to be a work of art at all. These biographies and autobiographies, for example, lives of great men, of men long dead and forgotten, that stand cheek by jowl with the novels and poems, are we to refuse to read them because they are not “art”? Or shall we read them, but read them in a different way, with a different aim? Shall we read them in the first place to satisfy that curiosity which possesses us sometimes when in the evening we linger in front of a house where the lights are lit and the blinds are not yet drawn, and each floor of the house shows us a different section of human life in being? Then we are consumed with curiosity about the lives of these people—the servants gossiping, the gentlemen dining, the girl dressing for a party, the old woman at the window with her knitting. Who are they, what are they, what are their names, their occupations, their thoughts, and adventures?

Biographies and memoirs answer such questions, light up innumerable such houses; they show us people going about their daily affairs, toiling, failing, succeeding, eating, hating, loving, until they die. And sometimes as we watch, the house fades and the iron railings vanish and we are out at sea; we are hunting, sailing, fighting; we are among savages and soldiers; we are taking part in great campaigns. Or if we like to stay here in England, in London, still the scene changes; the street narrows; the house becomes small, cramped, diamond-paned, and malodorous. We see a poet, Donne, driven from such a house because the walls were so thin that when the children cried their voices cut through them. We can follow him, through the paths that lie in the pages of books, to Twickenham; to Lady Bedford's Park, a famous meeting-ground for nobles and poets; and then turn our steps to Wilton, the great house under the downs, and hear Sidney read the *Arcadia* to his sister; and ramble among the very marshes and see the very herons that figure in that famous romance; and then again travel north with that other Lady Pembroke, Anne Clifford, to her wild moors, or plunge into the city and control our merriment at the sight of Gabriel Harvey in his black velvet suit arguing about poetry with Spenser. Nothing is more fascinating than to grope and stumble in the alternate darkness and splendour of Elizabethan London. But there is no staying there. The Temples and the Swifts, the Harleys and the St. Johns beckon us on; hour upon hour can be spent disentangling their quarrels and deciphering their characters; and when we tire of them we can stroll on, past a lady in black wearing diamonds, to Samuel Johnson and Goldsmith and Garrick; or cross the channel, if we like, and meet Voltaire and Diderot, Madame du Deffand; and so back to England and Twickenham—how certain places repeat themselves and certain names!—where Lady Bedford had her Park once and Pope lived later, to Walpole's home at Strawberry Hill. But Walpole introduces us to such a swarm of new acquaintances, there are so many houses to visit and bells to ring that we may well hesitate for a moment, on the Miss Berrys' doorstep, for example, when behold, up comes Thackeray; he is the friend of the woman whom Walpole loved; so that merely by going from friend to friend, from garden to garden, from house to house, we have passed from one end of English literature to another and wake to find ourselves here again in the present, if we can so differentiate this moment from all that have gone be-

fore. This, then, is one of the ways in which we can read these lives and letters; we can make them light up the many windows of the past; we can watch the famous dead in their familiar habits and fancy sometimes that we are very close and can surprise their secrets, and sometimes we may pull out a play or a poem that they have written and see whether it reads differently in the presence of the author. But this again rouses other questions. How far, we must ask ourselves, is a book influenced by its writer's life—how far is it safe to let the man interpret the writer? How far shall we resist or give way to the sympathies and antipathies that the man himself rouses in us—so sensitive are words, so receptive of the character of the author? These are questions that press upon us when we read lives and letters, and we must answer them for ourselves, for nothing can be more fatal than to be guided by the preferences of others in a matter so personal.

But also we can read such books with another aim, not to throw light on literature, not to become familiar with famous people, but to refresh and exercise our own creative powers. Is there not an open window on the right hand of the bookcase? How delightful to stop reading and look out! How stimulating the scene is, in its unconsciousness, its irrelevance, its perpetual movement—the colts galloping round the field, the woman filling her pail at the well, the donkey throwing back his head and emitting his long, acrid moan. The greater part of any library is nothing but the record of such fleeting moments in the lives of men, women, and donkeys. Every literature, as it grows old, has its rubbish-heap, its record of vanished moments and forgotten lives told in faltering and feeble accents that have perished. But if you give yourself up to the delight of rubbish-reading you will be surprised, indeed you will be overcome, by the relics of human life that have been cast out to moulder. It may be one letter—but what a vision it gives! It may be a few sentences—but what vistas they suggest! Sometimes a whole story will come together with such beautiful humour and pathos and completeness that it seems as if a great novelist had been at work, yet it is only an old actor, Tate Wilkinson, remembering the strange story of Captain Jones; it is only a young subaltern serving under Arthur Wellesley and falling in love with a pretty girl at Lisbon; it is only Maria Allen letting fall her sewing in the empty drawing-room and sighing how she wishes she had taken Dr. Burney's good advice and had never eloped with

her Rishy. None of this has any value; it is negligible in the extreme; yet how absorbing it is now and again to go through the rubbish-heaps and find rings and scissors and broken noses buried in the huge past and try to piece them together while the colt gallops round the field, the woman fills her pail at the well, and the donkey brays.

But we tire of rubbish-reading in the long run. We tire of searching for what is needed to complete the half-truth which is all that the Wilkinsons, the Bunburys, and the Maria Allens are able to offer us. They had not the artist's power of mastering and eliminating; they could not tell the whole truth even about their own lives; they have disfigured the story that might have been so shapely. Facts are all that they can offer us, and facts are a very inferior form of fiction. Thus the desire grows upon us to have done with half-statements and approximations; to cease from searching out the minute shades of human character, to enjoy the greater abstractness, the purer truth of fiction. Thus we create the mood, intense and generalised, unaware of detail, but stressed by some regular, recurrent beat, whose natural expression is poetry; and that is the time to read poetry when we are almost able to write it.

Western wind, when wilt thou blow?
The small rain down can rain.
Christ, if my love were in my arms,
And I in my bed again!

The impact of poetry is so hard and direct that for the moment there is no other sensation except that of the poem itself. What profound depths we visit then—how sudden and complete is our immersion! There is nothing here to catch hold of; nothing to stay us in our flight. The illusion of fiction is gradual; its effects are prepared; but who when they read these four lines stops to ask who wrote them, or conjures up the thought of Donne's house or Sidney's secretary; or enmeshes them in the intricacy of the past and the succession of generations? The poet is always our contemporary. Our being for the moment is centred and constricted, as in any violent shock of personal emotion. Afterwards, it is true, the sensation begins to spread in wider rings through our minds; remoter senses are reached; these begin to sound and to comment and we are aware of echoes and reflections. The intensity of poetry covers

an immense range of emotion. We have only to compare the force and directness of

I shall fall like a tree, and find my grave,
Only remembering that I grieve,

with the wavering modulation of

Minutes are numbered by the fall of sands,
As by an hour glass; the span of time
Doth waste us to our graves, and we look on it;
An age of pleasure, revelled out, comes home
At last, and ends in sorrow; but the life,
Weary of riot, numbers every sand,
Wailing in sighs, until the last drop down,
So to conclude calamity in rest,

or place the meditative calm of

whether we be young or old,
Our destiny, our being's heart and home,
Is with infinitude, and only there;
With hope it is, hope that can never die,
Effort, and expectation, and desire,
And something evermore about to be,

beside the complete and inexhaustible loveliness of

The moving Moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside—

or the splendid fantasy of

And the woodland haunter
Shall not cease to saunter
When, far down some glade,
Of the great world's burning,
One soft flame upturning,
Seems, to his discerning,
Crocus in the shade,

to bethink us of the varied art of the poet; his power to make us at once actors and spectators; his power to run his hand into char-

acter as if it were a glove, and be Falstaff or Lear; his power to condense, to widen, to state, once and for ever.

"We have only to compare"—with those words the cat is out of the bag, and the true complexity of reading is admitted. The first process, to receive impressions with the utmost understanding, is only half the process of reading; it must be completed, if we are to get the whole pleasure from a book, by another. We must pass judgment upon these multitudinous impressions; we must make of these fleeting shapes one that is hard and lasting. But not directly. Wait for the dust of reading to settle; for the conflict and the questioning to die down; walk, talk, pull the dead petals from a rose, or fall asleep. Then suddenly without our willing it, for it is thus that Nature undertakes these transitions, the book will return, but differently. It will float to the top of the mind as a whole. And the book as a whole is different from the book received currently in separate phrases. Details now fit themselves into their places. We see the shape from start to finish; it is a barn, a pig-sty, or a cathedral. Now then we can compare book with book as we compare building with building. But this act of comparison means that our attitude has changed; we are no longer the friends of the writer, but his judges; and just as we cannot be too sympathetic as friends, so as judges we cannot be too severe. Are they not criminals, books that have wasted our time and sympathy; are they not the most insidious enemies of society, corrupters, defilers, the writers of false books, faked books, books that fill the air with decay and disease? Let us then be severe in our judgments; let us compare each book with the greatest of its kind. There they hang in the mind, the shapes of the books we have read solidified by the judgments we have passed on them—*Robinson Crusoe*, *Emma*, *The Return of the Native*. Compare the novels with these—even the latest and least of novels has a right to be judged with the best. And so with poetry—when the intoxication of rhythm has died down and the splendour of words has faded, a visionary shape will return to us and this must be compared with *Lear*, with *Phèdre*, with *The Prelude*; or if not with these, with whatever is the best or seems to us to be the best in its own kind. And we may be sure that the newness of new poetry and fiction is its most superficial quality and that we have only to alter slightly, not to recast, the standards by which we have judged the old.

It would be foolish, then, to pretend that the second part of

reading, to judge, to compare, is as simple as the first—to open the mind wide to the fast flocking of innumerable impressions. To continue reading without the book before you, to hold one shadow-shape against another, to have read widely enough and with enough understanding to make such comparisons alive and illuminating—that is difficult; it is still more difficult to press further and to say, “Not only is the book of this sort, but it is of this value; here it fails; here it succeeds; this is bad; that is good.” To carry out this part of a reader’s duty needs such imagination, insight, and learning that it is hard to conceive any one mind sufficiently endowed; impossible for the most self-confident to find more than the seeds of such powers in himself. Would it not be wiser, then, to remit this part of reading and to allow the critics, the gowned and furred authorities of the library, to decide the question of the book’s absolute value for us? Yet how impossible! We may stress the value of sympathy; we may try to sink our own identity as we read. But we know that we cannot sympathise wholly or immerse ourselves wholly; there is always a demon in us who whispers, “I hate, I love,” and we cannot silence him. Indeed, it is precisely because we hate and we love that our relation with the poets and novelists is so intimate that we find the presence of another person intolerable. And even if the results are abhorrent and our judgments are wrong, still our taste, the nerve of sensation that sends shocks through us, is our chief illuminant; we learn through feeling; we cannot suppress our own idiosyncrasy without impoverishing it. But as time goes on perhaps we can train our taste; perhaps we can make it submit to some control. When it has fed greedily and lavishly upon books of all sorts—poetry, fiction, history, biography—and has stopped reading and looked for long spaces upon the variety, the incongruity of the living word, we shall find that it is changing a little; it is not so greedy, it is more reflective. It will begin to bring us not merely judgments on particular books, but it will tell us that there is a quality common to certain books. Listen, it will say, what shall we call *this*? And it will read us perhaps *Lear* and then perhaps the *Agamemnon* in order to bring out that common quality. Thus, with our taste to guide us, we shall venture beyond the particular book in search of qualities that group books together; we shall give them names and thus frame a rule that brings order into our perceptions. We shall gain a further and a rarer pleasure from that discrimination. But as a rule only lives when it is perpetually broken by contact with the books

themselves—nothing is easier and more stultifying than to make rules which exist out of touch with facts, in a vacuum—now at last, in order to steady ourselves in this difficult attempt, it may be well to turn to the very rare writers who are able to enlighten us upon literature as an art. Coleridge and Dryden and Johnson, in their considered criticism, the poets and novelists themselves in their unconsidered sayings, are often surprisingly relevant; they light up and solidify the vague ideas that have been tumbling in the misty depths of our minds. But they are only able to help us if we come to them laden with questions and suggestions won honestly in the course of our own reading. They can do nothing for us if we herd ourselves under their authority and lie down like sheep in the shade of a hedge. We can only understand their ruling when it comes in conflict with our own and vanquishes it.

If this is so, if to read a book as it should be read calls for the rarest qualities of imagination, insight, and judgment, you may perhaps conclude that literature is a very complex art and that it is unlikely that we shall be able, even after a lifetime of reading, to make any valuable contribution to its criticism. We must remain readers; we shall not put on the further glory that belongs to those rare beings who are also critics. But still we have our responsibilities as readers and even our importance. The standards we raise and the judgment we pass steal into the air and become part of the atmosphere which writers breathe as they work. An influence is created which tells upon them even if it never finds its way into print. And that influence, if it were well instructed, vigorous and individual and sincere, might be of great value now when criticism is necessarily in abeyance; when books pass in review like the procession of animals in a shooting gallery, and the critic has only one second in which to load and aim and shoot and may well be pardoned if he mistakes rabbits for tigers, eagles for barndoor fowls, or misses altogether and wastes his shot upon some peaceful cow grazing in a further field. If behind the erratic gunfire of the press the author felt that there was another kind of criticism, the opinion of people reading for the love of reading, slowly and unprofessionally, and judging with great sympathy and yet with great severity, might this not improve the quality of his work? And if by our means books were to become stronger, richer, and more varied, that would be an end worth reaching.

Yet who reads to bring about an end, however desirable? Are

there not some pursuits that we practise because they are good in themselves, and some pleasures that are final? And is not this among them? I have sometimes dreamt, at least, that when the Day of Judgment dawns and the great conquerors and lawyers and statesmen come to receive their rewards—their crowns, their laurels, their names carved indelibly upon imperishable marble—the Almighty will turn to Peter and will say, not without a certain envy when He sees us coming with our books under our arms, “Look, these need no reward. We have nothing to give them here. They have loved reading.”

A Primer of Existentialism

GORDON E. BIGELOW

FOR SOME YEARS I fought the word by irritably looking the other way whenever I stumbled across it, hoping that like dadaism and some of the other “isms” of the French *avant garde* it would go away if I ignored it. But existentialism was apparently more than the picture it evoked of uncombed beards, smoky basement cafes, and French beatniks regaling one another between sips of absinthe with brilliant variations on the theme of despair. It turned out to be of major importance to literature and the arts, to philosophy and theology, and of increasing importance to the social sciences. To learn more about it, I read several of the self-styled introductions to the subject, with the baffled sensation of a man who reads a critical introduction to a novel only to find that he must read the novel before he can understand the introduction. Therefore, I should like to provide here something most discussions of existentialism take for granted, a simple statement of its basic characteristics. This is a reckless thing to do because there are several kinds of existentialism and what one says of one kind may not be true of another, but there is an area of agreement, and it is this common ground that I should like to set forth here. We should not run into trouble so long as we understand from the outset that the six major themes outlined below will apply in varying degrees to particular existentialists. A reader should be

able to go from here to the existentialists themselves, to the more specialized critiques of them, or be able to recognize an existentialist theme or coloration in literature when he sees it.

A word first about the kinds of existentialism. Like transcendentalism of the last century, there are almost as many varieties of this *ism* as there are individual writers to whom the word is applied (not all of them claim it). But without being facetious we might group them into two main kinds, the *ungodly* and the *godly*. To take the ungodly or atheistic first, we would list as the chief spokesmen among many others Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and Simone de Beauvoir. Several of this important group of French writers had rigorous and significant experience in the Resistance during the Nazi occupation of France in World War II. Out of the despair which came with the collapse of their nation during those terrible years they found unexpected strength in the single indomitable human spirit, which even under severe torture could maintain the spirit of resistance, the unextinguishable ability to say "No." From this irreducible core in the human spirit, they erected after the war a philosophy which was a twentieth-century variation of the philosophy of Descartes. But instead of saying "I think, therefore I am," they said "I can say No, therefore I exist." As we shall presently see, the use of the word "exist" is of prime significance. This group is chiefly responsible for giving existentialism its status in the popular mind as a literary-philosophical cult.

Of the godly or theistic existentialists we should mention first a mid-nineteenth-century Danish writer, Søren Kierkegaard; two contemporary French Roman Catholics, Gabriel Marcel and Jacques Maritain; two Protestant theologians, Paul Tillich and Nicholas Berdyaev; and Martin Buber, an important contemporary Jewish theologian. Taken together, their writings constitute one of the most significant developments in modern theology. Behind both groups of existentialists stand other important figures, chiefly philosophers, who exert powerful influence upon the movement—Blaise Pascal, Friedrich Nietzsche, Henri Bergson, Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, among others. Several literary figures, notably Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, are frequently cited because existentialist attitudes and themes are prominent in their writings. The eclectic nature of this movement should already be sufficiently clear and the danger of applying too rigidly to any particular figure the general characteristics of the movement which I now make bold to describe:

1. EXISTENCE BEFORE ESSENCE. Existentialism gets its name from an insistence that human life is understandable only in terms of an individual man's existence, his particular experience of life. It says that a man *lives* (has existence) rather than *is* (has being or essence), and that every man's experience of life is unique, radically different from everyone else's and can be understood truly only in terms of his involvement in life or commitment to it. It strenuously shuns that view which assumes an ideal of Man or Mankind, a universal of human nature of which each man is only one example. It eschews the question of Greek philosophy, "*What is mankind?*" which suggests that man can be defined if he is ranged in his proper place in the order of nature; it asks instead the question of Job and St. Augustine, "*Who am I?*" with its suggestion of the uniqueness and mystery of each human life and its emphasis upon the subjective or personal rather than the objective or impersonal. From the outside a man appears to be just another natural creature; from the inside he is an entire universe, the center of infinity. The existentialist insists upon this latter radically subjective view, and from this grows much of the rest of existentialism.

2. REASON IS IMPOTENT TO DEAL WITH THE DEPTHS OF HUMAN LIFE. There are two parts to this proposition—first, that human reason is relatively weak and imperfect, and second, that there are dark places in human life which are "nonreason" and to which reason scarcely penetrates. Since Plato, Western civilization has usually assumed a separation of reason from the rest of the human psyche, and has glorified reason as suited to command the nonrational part. The classic statement of this separation appears in the *Phaedrus*, where Plato describes the psyche in the myth of the chariot which is drawn by the white steeds of the emotions and the black unruly steeds of the appetites. The driver of the chariot is Reason who holds the reins which control the horses and the whip to subdue the surging black steeds of passion. Only the driver, the rational nature, is given human form; the rest of the psyche, the nonrational part, is given a lower, animal form. This separation and exaltation of reason is carried further in the allegory of the cave in the *Republic*. You recall the sombre picture of human life with which the story begins: men are chained in the dark in a cave, with their backs to a flickering firelight, able to see only uncertain shadows moving on the wall before them, able to hear only confused echoes of sounds. One of the men, breaking free from his chains, is able to

turn and look upon the objects themselves and the light which casts the shadows; even, at last, he is able to work his way entirely out of the cave into the sunlight beyond. All this he is able to do through his reason; he escapes from the bondage of error, from time and change, from death itself, into the realm of changeless eternal ideas or Truth, and the lower nature which had chained him in darkness is left behind.

Existentialism in our time, and this is one of its most important characteristics, insists upon reuniting the "lower" or irrational parts of the psyche with the "higher." It insists that man must be taken in his wholeness and not in some divided state, that whole man contains not only intellect but also anxiety, guilt, and the will to power—which modify and sometimes overwhelm the reason. A man seen in this light is fundamentally ambiguous, if not mysterious, full of contradictions and tensions which cannot be dissolved simply by taking thought. "Human life," said Berdyaev, "is permeated by underground streams." One is reminded of D. H. Lawrence's outburst against Franklin and his rational attempt to achieve moral perfection: "The Perfectability of Man! . . . The perfectability of which man? I am many men. Which of them are you going to perfect? I am not a mechanical contrivance. . . . It's a queer thing is a man's soul. It is the whole of him. Which means it is the unknown as well as the known. . . . The soul of man is a dark vast forest, with wild life in it." The emphasis in existentialism is not on idea but upon the thinker who has the idea. It accepts not only his power of thought, but his contingency and fallibility, his frailty, his body, blood, and bones, and above all his death. Kierkegaard emphasized the distinction between *subjective* truth (what a person *is*) and *objective* truth (what the person *knows*), and said that we encounter the true self not in the detachment of thought but in the involvement and agony of choice and in the pathos of commitment to our choice. This distrust of rational systems helps to explain why many existential writers in their own expression are paradoxical or prophetic or gnomic, why their works often belong more to literature than to philosophy.

3. ALIENATION OR ESTRANGEMENT. One major result of the dissociation of reason from the rest of the psyche has been the growth of science, which has become one of the hallmarks of Western civilization, and an ever-increasing rational ordering of men in society. As the existentialists view them, the main forces of history

since the Renaissance have progressively separated man from concrete earthy existence, have forced him to live at ever higher levels of abstraction, have collectivized individual man out of existence, have driven God from the heavens, or what is the same thing, from the hearts of men. They are convinced that modern man lives in a fourfold condition of alienation: from God, from nature, from other men, from his own true self.

The estrangement from God is most shockingly expressed by Nietzsche's anguished cry, "God is dead," a cry which has continuously echoed through the writings of the existentialists, particularly the French. This theme of spiritual barrenness is a commonplace in literature of this century, from Eliot's "Hollow Man" to the novels of Dos Passos, Hemingway, and Faulkner. It often appears in writers not commonly associated with the existentialists as in this remarkable passage from *A Story-Teller's Story*, where Sherwood Anderson describes his own awakening to his spiritual emptiness. He tells of walking alone late at night along a moonlit road when,

I had suddenly an odd, and to my own seeming, a ridiculous desire to abase myself before something not human and so stepping into the moonlit road, I knelt in the dust. Having no God, the gods having been taken from me by the life about me, as a personal God has been taken from all modern men by a force within that man himself does not understand but that is called the intellect, I kept smiling at the figure I cut in my own eyes as I knelt in the road. . . .

There was no God in the sky, no God in myself, no conviction in myself that I had the power to believe in a God, and so I merely knelt in the dust in silence and no words came to my lips.

In another passage Anderson wondered if the giving of itself by an entire generation to mechanical things was not really making all men impotent, if the desire for a greater navy, a greater army, taller public buildings, was not a sign of growing impotence. He felt that Puritanism and the industrialism which was its offspring had sterilized modern life, and proposed that men return to a healthful animal vigor by renewed contact with simple things of the earth, among them untrammelled sexual expression. One is reminded of the unkempt and delectable raffishness of Steinbeck's *Cannery Row*

or of D. H. Lawrence's quasi-religious doctrine of sex, "blood-consciousness" and the "divine otherness" of animal existence.

Man's estrangement from nature has been a major theme in literature at least since Rousseau and the Romantic movement, and can hardly be said to be the property of existentialists. But this group nevertheless adds its own insistence that one of modern man's most urgent dangers is that he builds ever higher the brick and steel walls of technology which shut him away from a health-giving life according to "nature." Their treatment of this theme is most commonly expressed as part of a broader insistence that modern man needs to shun abstraction and return to "concreteness" or "wholeness."

A third estrangement has occurred at the social level and its sign is a growing dismay at man's helplessness before the great machine-like colossus of industrialized society. This is another major theme of Western literature, and here again, though they hardly discovered the danger or began the protest, the existentialists in our time renew the protest against any pattern or force which would stifle the unique and spontaneous in individual life. The crowding of men into cities, the subdivision of labor which submerges the man in his economic function, the burgeoning of centralized government, the growth of advertising, propaganda, and mass media of entertainment and communication—all the things which force men into Riesman's "Lonely Crowd"—these same things drive men asunder by destroying their individuality and making them live on the surface of life, content to deal with things rather than people. "Exteriorization," says Berdyaev, "is the source of slavery, whereas freedom is interiorization. Slavery always indicates alienation, the ejection of human nature into the external." This kind of alienation is exemplified by Zero, in Elmer Rice's play "The Adding Machine." Zero's twenty-five years as a bookkeeper in a department store have dried up his humanity, making him incapable of love, of friendship, of any deeply felt, freely expressed emotion. Such estrangement is often given as the reason for man's inhumanity to man, the explanation for injustice in modern society. In Camus' short novel, aptly called *The Stranger*, a young man is convicted by a court of murder. This is a homicide which he has actually committed under extenuating circumstances. But the court never listens to any of the relevant evidence, seems never to hear anything that pertains to

the crime itself; it convicts the young man on wholly irrelevant grounds—because he had behaved in an unconventional way at his mother's funeral the day before the homicide. In this book one feels the same dream-like distortion of reality as in the trial scene in *Alice in Wonderland*, a suffocating sense of being enclosed by events which are irrational or absurd but also inexorable. Most disturbing of all is the young man's aloneness, the impermeable membrane of estrangement which surrounds him and prevents anyone else from penetrating to his experience of life or sympathizing with it.

The fourth kind of alienation, man's estrangement from his own true self, especially as his nature is distorted by an exaltation of reason, is another theme having an extensive history as a major part of the Romantic revolt. Of the many writers who treat the theme, Hawthorne comes particularly close to the emphasis of contemporary existentialists. His Ethan Brand, Dr. Rappaccini, and Roger Chillingworth are a recurrent figure who represents the dislocation in human nature which results when an overdeveloped or misapplied intellect severs "the magnetic chain of human sympathy." Hawthorne is thoroughly existential in his concern for the sanctity of the individual human soul, as well as in his preoccupation with sin and the dark side of human nature, which must be seen in part as his attempt to build back some fullness to the flattened image of man bequeathed to him by the Enlightenment. Whitman was trying to do this when he added flesh and bone and a sexual nature to the spiritualized image of man he inherited from Emerson, though his image remains diffused and attenuated by the same cosmic optimism. Many of the nineteenth-century depictions of man represent him as a figure of power or of potential power, sometimes as daimonic, like Melville's Ahab, but after World War I the power is gone; man is not merely distorted or truncated, he is hollow, powerless, faceless. At the time when his command over natural forces seems to be unlimited, man is pictured as weak, ridden with nameless dread. And this brings us to another of the major themes of existentialism.

4. "FEAR AND TREMBLING," ANXIETY. At Stockholm when he accepted the Nobel Prize, William Faulkner said that "Our tragedy today is a general and universal physical fear so long sustained by now that we can even bear it. There are no longer problems of the spirit. There is only one question: When will I be blown up?" The

optimistic vision of the Enlightenment which saw man, through reason and its extensions in science, conquering all nature and solving all social and political problems in a continuous upward spiral of Progress, cracked open like a melon on the rock of World War I. The theories which held such high hopes died in that sickening and unimaginable butchery. Here was a concrete fact of human nature and society which the theories could not contain. The Great Depression and World War II deepened the sense of dismay which the loss of these ideals brought, but only with the atomic bomb did this become an unbearable terror, a threat of instant annihilation which confronted all men, even those most insulated by the thick crust of material goods and services. Now the most unthinking person could sense that each advance in mechanical technique carried not only a chromium and plush promise of comfort but a threat as well.

Sartre, following Kierkegaard, speaks of another kind of anxiety which oppresses modern man—"the anguish of Abraham"—the necessity which is laid upon him to make moral choices on his own responsibility. A military officer in wartime knows the agony of choice which forces him to sacrifice part of his army to preserve the rest, as does a man in high political office, who must make decisions affecting the lives of millions. The existentialists claim that each of us must make moral decisions in our own lives which involve the same anguish. Kierkegaard finds that this necessity is one thing which makes each life unique, which makes it impossible to speculate or generalize about human life, because each man's case is irretrievably his own, something in which he is personally and passionately involved. His book *Fear and Trembling* is an elaborate and fascinating commentary on the Old Testament story of Abraham, who was commanded by God to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac. Abraham thus becomes the emblem of man who must make a harrowing choice, in this case between love for his son and love for God, between the universal moral law which says categorically, "thou shalt not kill," and the unique inner demand of his religious faith. Abraham's decision, which is to violate the abstract and collective moral law, has to be made not in arrogance but in fear and trembling, one of the inferences being that sometimes one must make an exception to the general law because he is (existentially) an exception, a concrete being whose existence can never be completely subsumed under any universal.

5. THE ENCOUNTER WITH NOTHINGNESS. For the man alienated from God, from nature, from his fellow man and from himself, what is left at last but Nothingness? The testimony of the existentialists is that this is where modern man now finds himself, not on the highway of upward Progress toward a radiant Utopia but on the brink of a catastrophic precipice, below which yawns the absolute void, an uncompromised black Nothingness. In one sense this is Eliot's Wasteland inhabited by his Hollow Man, who is

Shape without form, shade without color
Paralyzed force, gesture without motion.

This is what moves E. A. Robinson's Richard Cory, the man who is everything that might make us wish that we were in his place, to go home one calm summer night and put a bullet through his head.

One of the most convincing statements of the encounter with Nothingness is made by Leo Tolstoy in "My Confession." He tells how in good health, in the prime of life, when he had everything that a man could desire—wealth, fame, aristocratic social position, a beautiful wife and children, a brilliant mind and great artistic talent in the height of their powers, he nevertheless was seized with a growing uneasiness, a nameless discontent which he could not shake or alleviate. His experience was like that of a man who falls sick, with symptoms which he disregards as insignificant; but the symptoms return again and again until they merge into a continuous suffering. And the patient suddenly is confronted with the overwhelming fact that what he took for mere indisposition is more important to him than anything else on earth, that it is death! "I felt the ground on which I stood was crumbling, that there was nothing for me to stand on, that what I had been living for was nothing, that I had no reason for living. . . . To stop was impossible, to go back was impossible; and it was impossible to shut my eyes so as to see that there was nothing before me but suffering and actual death, absolute annihilation." This is the "Sickness Unto Death" of Kierkegaard, the despair in which one wishes to die but cannot. Hemingway's short story, "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place," gives an unforgettable expression of this theme. At the end of the story, the old waiter climbs into bed late at night saying to himself, "What did he fear? It was not fear or dread. It was a nothing which he knew too well. It was all a nothing and a man was nothing too. . . . Nada y pues nada, y nada y pues nada." And then because he has ex-

perienced the death of God he goes on to recite the Lord's Prayer in blasphemous despair: "Our Nothing who are in Nothing, nothing be thy nothing. . . ." And then the Ave Maria, "Hail nothing, full of nothing. . . ." This is stark, even for Hemingway, but the old waiter does no more than name the void felt by most people in the early Hemingway novels, a hunger they seek to assuage with alcohol, sex, and violence in an aimless progress from bar to bed to bull-ring. It goes without saying that much of the despair and pessimism in other contemporary authors springs from a similar sense of the void in modern life.

6. FREEDOM. Sooner or later, as a theme that includes all the others, the existentialist writings bear upon freedom. The themes we have outlined above describe either some loss of man's freedom or some threat to it, and all existentialists of whatever sort are concerned to enlarge the range of human freedom.

For the avowed atheists like Sartre freedom means human autonomy. In a purposeless universe man is *condemned* to freedom because he is the only creature who is "self-surpassing," who can become something other than he is. Precisely because there is no God to give purpose to the universe, each man must accept individual responsibility for his own becoming, a burden made heavier by the fact that in choosing for himself he chooses for all men "the image of man as he ought to be." A man *is* the sum total of the acts that make up his life—no more, no less—and though the coward has made himself cowardly, it is always possible for him to change and make himself heroic. In Sartre's novel, *The Age of Reason*, one of the least likable of the characters, almost overwhelmed by despair and self-disgust at his homosexual tendencies, is on the point of solving his problem by mutilating himself with a razor, when in an effort of will he throws the instrument down, and we are given to understand that from this moment he will have mastery over his aberrant drive. Thus in the daily course of ordinary life must men shape their becoming in Sartre's world.

The religious existentialists interpret man's freedom differently. They use much the same language as Sartre, develop the same themes concerning the predicament of man, but always include God as a radical factor. They stress the man of faith rather than the man of will. They interpret man's existential condition as a state of alienation from his essential nature which is God-like, the problem of his life being to heal the chasm between the two, that is, to find

salvation. The mystery and ambiguity of man's existence they attribute to his being the intersection of two realms. "Man bears within himself," writes Berdyaev, "the image which is both the image of man and the image of God, and is the image of man as far as the image of God is actualized." Tillich describes salvation as "the act in which the cleavage between the essential being and the existential situation is overcome." Freedom here, as for Sartre, involves an acceptance of responsibility for choice and a *commitment* to one's choice. This is the meaning of faith, a faith like Abraham's, the commitment which is an agonizing sacrifice of one's own desire and will and dearest treasure to God's will.

A final word. Just as one should not expect to find in a particular writer all of the characteristics of existentialism as we have described them, he should also be aware that some of the most striking expressions of existentialism in literature and the arts come to us by indirection, often through symbols or through innovations in conventional form. Take the preoccupation of contemporary writers with time. In *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner both collapses and expands normal clock time, or by juxtapositions of past and present blurs time into a single amorphous pool. He does this by using various forms of "stream of consciousness" or other techniques which see life in terms of unique, subjective experience—that is, existentially. The conventional view of externalized life, a rational orderly progression cut into uniform segments by the hands of a clock, he rejects in favor of a view which sees life as opaque, ambiguous, and irrational—that is, as the existentialist sees it. Graham Greene does something like this in *The Power and the Glory*. He creates a scene isolated in time and cut off from the rest of the world, steamy and suffocating as if a bell jar had been placed over it. Through this atmosphere fetid with impending death and human suffering, stumbles the whiskey priest, lonely and confused, pursued by a police lieutenant who has experienced the void and the death of God.

Such expressions in literature do not mean necessarily that the authors are conscious existentialist theorizers, or even that they know the writings of such theorizers. Faulkner may never have read Heidegger—or St. Augustine—both of whom attempt to demonstrate that time is more within a man and subject to his unique experience of it than it is outside him. But it is legitimate to call Faulkner's views of time and life "existential" in this novel because

in recent years existentialist theorizers have given such views a local habitation and a name. One of the attractions, and one of the dangers, of existential themes is that they become like Sir Thomas Browne's quincunx: once one begins to look for them, he sees them everywhere. But if one applies restraint and discrimination, he will find that they illuminate much of contemporary literature and sometimes the literature of the past as well.

SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING

How Should One Read a Book?

1. Write a sentence that states Mrs. Woolf's point more sharply and inclusively than she herself has done in any one sentence, perhaps something like "In reading a book one should _____ because _____."

2. Write an essay on the subject "On Becoming Mrs. Woolf." You will start, of course, by pointing out to your readers that this is an exercise recommended by Mrs. Woolf herself ("Do not dictate to your author; try to become him"). But first you must find yourself a central thesis, perhaps trying out, in your mind or in class, one of the following:

(a) Becoming Mrs. Woolf is an uneasy experience.

(b) Becoming Mrs. Woolf is an exciting experience.

In developing either of these, you would consider the intensity of her imagination and the question of how she perceives reality—the braying of the donkey and the women at the pump; the moment at the corner when the tree shook; the times when, through books, experience can seem a mansion, a ship, or a diamond-paned house; the question about "the very spot"; the urgency where "there is no staying"; the fleeting moments, hers and those the library contains. You might go on to explain to your readers what Mrs. Woolf does with windows, with mirrors, with the donkey, with the humorous rose bush turned to dead petals as we wait "for the dust of reading to settle." You will certainly want to explain what she is picturing when she mentions "the dark side of the mind," and why the phrase is both familiar and exciting.

3. Write a straight expository essay explaining to your readers Mrs. Woolf's theory of values. Begin by remarking that Mrs. Woolf's

values—that is, what she values in literature—at first seem confusing, even contradictory. She seems to say that no one should judge, that all things have their different and individual values; yet she clearly believes that *Lear* is better than *Hamlet*, and that the good judge would agree. Then end your introductory paragraph with a good expository thesis, well edged—something like “Mrs. Woolf believes in absolute standards, but knowing that standards are hard to apply, she admits into heaven the mere joy of reading.”

Try to use, in your essay, three of her words you have not used before—*multitudinous*, *impalpable*, *trudging*, *heterogeneous*, *fancy*, *malodorous*, and so forth.

A Primer of Existentialism

4. Write an essay defining some ordinary concept—like education, loyalty, success, love. Develop your explanation from the arguable thesis “Though commonly used, commonly misunderstood.” Show what the thing you are defining is not, and what it truly is.

5. Write an essay on the thesis “Mrs. Woolf shows existentialist tendencies”—using evidence only from “How Should One Read a Book?”

6. Write an essay on the thesis “Life on this campus would be better if, in choosing for himself, everyone followed Sartre’s rule of choosing for all men ‘the image of man as he ought to be’.” Try to use three or four striking words from Bigelow—*gnomic*, *raffishness*, *dislocation*, *amorphous*, *steaminess*. Try one sentence like Bigelow’s “The crowding of men into cities . . .” (p. 17). Work in somewhere one Shakespearian allusion, as Bigelow does in his final paragraph when he quotes indirectly and subtly from the following familiar lines in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*:

And, as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet’s pen
Turns them into shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.

2 / Structure:

Middle Tactics

Sabotage in Springfield: Webster's Third Edition

WILSON FOLLETT

But What's a Dictionary For? • BERGEN EVANS

MR. FOLLETT AND MR. EVANS have also read a book. But they have reacted violently, Mr. Follett to the book, Mr. Evans to Mr. Follett. Their essays illustrate not only how an argument provides a sharp thesis, pointing a clear line through the whole essay, but also how a writer deploys the *pro*'s and *con*'s of his argument in the body, or "middle," of his essay. Again, as you read, look for a specific statement of thesis in each. Read the essays through once, to get your bearings. Then, to acquire a feeling for middle tactics, go through again, marking all words and phrases—*but, now, to be sure*, and the like—that signal the turns from one side of the question to the other. Notice how both authors use questions to pull their arguments back to their own sides; indeed, notice Mr. Evans's title, "But What's a Dictionary For?" You might bracket as *pro* all portions of the essay affirming the author's thesis, and *con* all admissions in favor of the opposition. The two diagrams under "Suggestions for Writing" at the end of this section (pp. 48–49) may help you to see the tactical principles.

Sabotage in Springfield: Webster's Third Edition

WILSON FOLLETT

OF DICTIONARIES, as of newspapers, it might be said that the bad ones are too bad to exist, the good ones too good not to be better. No dictionary of a living language is perfect or ever can be, if only because the time required for compilation, editing, and issuance is so great that shadows of obsolescence are falling on parts of any such work before it ever gets into the hands of a user. Preparation of *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language* began intensively in the Springfield establishment of G. & C. Merriam Company in 1936, but the century was nine months into its seventh decade before any outsider could have his first look at what had been accomplished. His first look is, of course, incompetent to acquaint him with the merits of the new work; these no one can fully discover without months or years of everyday use. On the other hand, it costs only minutes to find out that what will rank as the great event of American linguistic history in this decade, and perhaps in this quarter century, is in many crucial particulars a very great calamity.

Why should the probable and possible superiorities of the Third New International be so difficult to assess, the shortcomings so easy? Because the superiorities are special, departmental, and recondite, the shortcomings general and within the common grasp. The new dictionary comes to us with a claim of 100,000 new words or new definitions. These run almost overwhelmingly to scientific and technological terms or meanings that have come into existence since 1934, and especially to words classified as ISV (belonging to the international scientific vocabulary). No one person can possibly use or even comprehend all of them; the coverage in this domain, certainly impressive to the nonspecialist, may or may not command

the admiration of specialists. It is said that historians of the graphic arts and of architecture were displeased with the 1934 Webster, both for its omissions and for some definitions of what it included in their fields. Its 1961 successor may have disarmed their reservations; only they can pronounce.

But all of us may without brashness form summary judgments about the treatment of what belongs to all of us—the standard, staple, traditional language of general reading and speaking, the ordinary vocabulary and idioms of novelist, essayist, letter writer, reporter, editorial writer, teacher, student, advertiser; in short, fundamental English. And it is precisely in this province that Webster III has thrust upon us a dismaying assortment of the questionable, the perverse, the unworthy, and the downright outrageous.

Furthermore, what was left out is as legitimate a grievance to the ordinary reader as anything that has been put in. Think—if you can—of an unabridged dictionary from which you cannot learn who Mark Twain was (though *mark twain* is entered as a leadsmen's cry), or what were the names of the apostles, or that the Virgin was Mary the mother of Jesus of Nazareth, or what and where the District of Columbia is!

The disappointment and the shock are intensified, of course, because of the unchallenged position earned by the really unabridged immediate predecessor of this strange work. *Webster's New International Dictionary*, Second Edition (1934), consummated under the editorship of William Allan Neilson, at once became the most important reference book in the world to American writers, editors, teachers, students, and general readers—everyone to whom American English was a matter of serious interest. What better could the next revision do than extend the Second Edition in the direction of itself, bring it up to date, and correct its scattering of oversights and errata?

The 1934 dictionary had been, heaven knows, no citadel of conservatism, no last bastion of puristical bigotry. But it had made shrewd reports on the status of individual words; it had taken its clear, beautifully written definitions from fit uses of an enormous vocabulary by judicious users; it had provided accurate, impartial accounts of the endless guerrilla war between grammarian and antigrammarian and so given every consultant the means to work out his own decisions. Who could wish the forthcoming revision any

better fortune than a comparable success in applying the same standards to whatever new matter the new age imposed?

Instead, we have seen a century and a third of illustrious history largely jettisoned; we have seen a novel dictionary formula improvised, in great part out of snap judgments and the sort of theoretical improvement that in practice impairs; and we have seen the gates propped wide open in enthusiastic hospitality to miscellaneous confusions and corruptions. In fine, the anxiously awaited work that was to have crowned cisatlantic linguistic scholarship with a particular glory turns out to be a scandal and a disaster. Worse yet, it plumes itself on its faults and parades assiduously cultivated sins as virtues without precedent.

Examination cannot proceed far without revealing that Webster III, behind its front of passionless objectivity, is in truth a fighting document. And the enemy it is out to destroy is every obstinate vestige of linguistic punctilio, every surviving influence that makes for the upholding of standards, every criterion for distinguishing between better usages and worse. In other words, it has gone over bodily to the school that construes traditions as enslaving, the rudimentary principles of syntax as crippling, and taste as irrelevant. This revolution leaves it in the anomalous position of loudly glorifying its own ancestry—which is indeed glorious—while tacitly sabotaging the principles and ideals that brought the preceding Merriam-Webster to its unchallengeable preeminence. The Third New International is at once a resounding tribute of lip service to the Second and a wholesale repudiation of it—a sweeping act of apology, contrition, and reform.

The right-about-face is, of course, particularly evident in the vocabulary approved. Within a few days of publication the new dictionary was inevitably notorious for its unreserved acceptance as standard of *wise up*, *get hep* (it uses the second as a definition of the first), *ants in one's pants*, *one for the book*, *hugeous*, *nixie*, *passel*, *hepped up* (with *hepcat* and *hepster*), *anyplace*, *someplace*, and so forth. These and a swarm of their kind it admits to full canonical standing by the suppression of such qualifying status labels as *colloquial*, *slang*, *cant*, *facetious*, and *substandard*. The classification *colloquial* it abolishes outright: "it is impossible to know whether a word out of context is colloquial or not." Of *slang* it makes a chary occasional use despite a similar reservation: "No word is invariably slang, and many standard words can be given

slang connotations or used so inappropriately as to become slang." *Cornball* is ranked as slang, *corny* is not.

The overall effect signifies a large-scale abrogation of one major responsibility of the lexicographer. He renounces it on the curious ground that helpful discriminations are so far beyond his professional competence that he is obliged to leave them to those who, professing no competence at all, have vainly turned to him for guidance. If some George Ade of the future, aspiring to execute a fable in slang, were to test his attempt by the status labels in Webster III, he would quickly discover with chagrin that he had expressed himself almost without exception in officially applauded English. With but slight exaggeration we can say that if an expression can be shown to have been used in print by some jaded reporter, some candidate for office or his speech writer, some potboiling minor novelist, it is well enough credentialed for the full blessing of the new lexicography.

This extreme tolerance of crude neologisms and of shabby diction generally, however, is but one comparatively trifling aspect of the campaign against punctilio. We begin to sound its deeper implications when we plunge into the definitions and the copious examples that illustrate and support them. Under the distributive pronoun *each* we find, side by side: "(each of them is to pay his own fine) (each of them are to pay their own fine)." Where could anyone look for a neater, more succinct way to outlaw the dusty dogma that a pronoun should agree in number with its antecedent? Here is the same maneuver again under another distributive, *everybody*: "usu. referred to by the third person singular (everybody is bringing his own lunch) but sometimes by a plural personal pronoun (everybody had made up their minds)." Or try *whom* and *whomever*: "(a . . . recruit whom he hoped would prove to be a crack salesman) (people . . . whom you never thought would sympathize) . . . (I go out to talk to whomever it is) . . . (he attacked whomever disagreed with him)." It is, then, all right to put the subject of a finite verb in the accusative case—"esp. after a preposition or a verb of which it might mistakenly be considered the object."

Shall we look into what our dictionary does with a handful of the more common solecisms, such as a publisher might introduce into a cooked-up test for would-be copy editors? Begin with *center around* (or *about*). It seems obvious that expressions derived from

Euclidean geometry should make Euclidean sense. A center is a point; it is what things are around, not what is around them; they center *in* or *on* or *at* the point. The Second Edition defined the Great White Way as "That part of Broadway . . . centering about Times Square"—patently an oversight. Is it the same oversight that produces, in the Third: "heresy . . . 3: a group or school of thought centering around a particular heresy"? We look up *center* itself, and, lo: "(a story to tell, centered around the political development of a great state) . . . (more scholarship than usual was centered around the main problems)," followed by several equivalent specimens.

Here is *due to*. First we come on irreproachable definitions, irreproachably illustrated, of *due* noun and *due* adjective, and we think we are out of the woods. Alas, they are followed by the manufacture of a composite preposition, *due to*, got up solely to extenuate such abominations as "the event was canceled due to inclement weather." An adjective can modify a verb, then. And here is a glance at that peculiarly incriminating redundancy of the slipshod writer, *equally as*: "equally opposed to Communism as to Fascism." The intolerable *hardly than* or *scarcely than* construction is in full favor: "hardly had the birds dropped than she jumped into the water and retrieved them." The sequence *different than* has the double approbation of editorial use and a citation: conjunctive *unlike* means "in a manner that is different than," and a passage under *different* reads "vastly different in size than it was twenty-five years ago." Adjectival *unlike* and conjunctive *unlike* both get illustrations that implicitly commend the unanchored and grammarless modifier: "so many fine men were outside the charmed circle that, unlike most colleges, there was no disgrace in not being a club man"; "unlike in the gasoline engine, fuel does not enter the cylinder with air on the intake stroke."

This small scattering should not end without some notice of that darling of the advanced libertarians, *like* as a conjunction, first in the meaning of *as*, secondly (and more horribly) in that of *as if*. Now, it is well known to the linguistic historian that *like* was so used for a long time before and after Langland. But it is as well known that the language rather completely sloughed off this usage; that it has long been no more than a regional colloquialism, a rarely seen aberration among competent writers, or an artificially cultivated irritant among defiant ones. The *Saturday Evening Post*, in which

like for *as* is probably more frequent than in any other painstakingly edited magazine, has seldom if ever printed that construction except in reproducing the speech or tracing the thoughts of characters to whom it might be considered natural. The arguments for *like* have been merely defensive and permissive. Not for centuries has there been any real pressure of authority on a writer to use *like* as a conjunction—until our Third New International Dictionary decided to exert its leverage.

How it is exerted will appear in the following: “(impromptu programs where they ask questions much like I do on the air) . . . (looks like they can raise better tobacco) (looks like he will get the job) (wore his clothes like he was . . . afraid of getting dirt on them) (was like he’d come back from a long trip) (acted like she felt sick) . . . (sounded like the motor had stopped) . . . (the violin now sounds like an old masterpiece should) (did it like he told me to) . . . (wanted a doll like she saw in the store window) . . . (anomalies like just had occurred).”

By the processes represented in the foregoing and countless others for which there is no room here, the latest Webster whittles away at one after another of the traditionary controls until there is little or nothing left of them. The controls, to be sure, have often enough been overvalued and overdone by pedants and purists, by martinets and bigots; but more often, and much more importantly, they have worked as aids toward dignified, workmanlike, and cogent uses of the wonderful language that is our inheritance. To erode and undermine them is to convert the language into a confusion of unchanneled, incalculable williwaws, a capricious wind blowing whithersoever it listeth. And that, if we are to judge by the total effect of the pages under scrutiny—2720 of them and nearly 8000 columns of vocabulary, all compact in Times Roman—is exactly what is wanted by the patient and dedicated saboteurs in Springfield. They, if they keep their ears to the ground, will hear many echoes of the despairing cry already wrung from one editorial assistant on a distinguished magazine that still puts its faith in standards: “Why have a Dictionary at all if anything goes?”

The definitions are reinforced, it will have been conveyed, with copious citations from printed sources. These citations occupy a great fraction of the total space. They largely account for the reduction in the number of entries (from 600,000 to 450,000) and for the elimination of the Gazetteer, the Biographical Dictionary, and

the condensed key to pronunciation and symbols that ran across the bottoms of facing pages—all very material deprivations. Some 14,000 authors, we are told, are represented in the illustrative quotations—"mostly from the mid-twentieth century."

Can some thousands of authors truly worth space in a dictionary ever be found in any one brief period? Such a concentration can hardly fail to be, for the purposes of a dictionary, egregiously overweighted with the contemporary and the transient. Any very short period, such as a generation, is a period of transition in the history of English, and any great mass of examples drawn primarily from it will be disproportionately focused on transitional and ephemeral elements. To say that recording English *as we find it today* is precisely the purpose of a new dictionary is not much of a retort. For the bulk of the language that we use has come down to us with but minor, glacially slow changes from time out of mind, and a worthy record of it must stand on a much broader base than the fashions of yesterday.

It is, then, a mercy that among the thousands of scraps from recent authors, many of them still producing, we can also find hundreds from Shakespeare, the English Bible, Fielding, Dickens, Hawthorne, Melville, Henry James, Mark Twain, and so on. But the great preponderance of latterday prose, little of it worth repeating and a good deal of it hardly worth printing in the first place, is likely to curtail by years the useful life of the Third New International.

So much is by the way. When we come to the definitions proper we face something new, startling, and formidable in lexicography. The definitions, all of them conformed to a predetermined rhetorical pattern, may be products of a theory—Gestaltist, perhaps?—of how the receiving mind works. The pattern, in the editor's general preface, is described as follows: "The primary objective of precise, sharp defining has been met through development of a new dictionary style based upon completely analytical one-phrase definitions throughout the book. Since the headword in a definition is intended to be modified only by structural elements restrictive in some degree and essential to each other, the use of commas either to separate or to group has been severely limited, chiefly to elements in apposition or in series. The new defining pattern does not provide for a predication which conveys further expository comment."

This doctrine of the strictly unitary definition is of course formulated and applied in the interest of a logical integrity and a simplification never before consistently attained by lexical definitions. What it produces, when applied with the rigor here insisted on, is in the first place some of the oddest prose ever concocted by pundits. A typical specimen, from the definition of the simplest possible term: "**rabbit punch . . .** : a short chopping blow delivered to the back of the neck or the base of the skull with the edge of the hand opposite the thumb that is illegal in boxing." When the idea, being not quite so simple, requires the one-phrase statement of several components, the definition usually turns out to be a great unmanageable and unpunctuated blob of words strung out beyond the retentive powers of most minds that would need the definition at all. Both theory and result will emerge clearly enough from a pair of specimens, the first dealing with a familiar everyday noun, the second with a mildly technical one:

groan . . . 1: a deep usu. inarticulate and involuntary often strangled sound typically abruptly begun and ended and usu. indicative of pain or grief or tension or desire or sometimes disapproval or annoyance

kymograph . . . 1: a recording device including an electric motor or clockwork that drives a usu. slowly revolving drum which carries a roll of plain or smoked paper and also having an arrangement for tracing on the paper by means of a stylus a graphic record of motion or pressure (as of the organs of speech, blood pressure, or respiration) often in relation to particular intervals of time.

About these typical definitions as prose, there is much that any good reader might well say. What must be said is that the grim suppression of commas is a mere crotchet. It takes time to read such definitions anyway; commas in the right places would speed rather than slow the reading and would clarify rather than obscure the sense, so that the unitary effect—largely imaginary at best—would be more helped than hurt. In practice, the one-phrase design without further expository predication lacks all the asserted advantages over a competently written definition of the free conventional sort; it is merely more difficult to write, often impossible to write well, and tougher to take in. Compare the corresponding definitions from the Second Edition:

groan . . . A low, moaning sound; usually, a deep, mournful sound uttered in pain or great distress; sometimes, an expression of strong disapprobation; as, the remark was received with *groans*.

kymograph . . . a An automatic apparatus consisting of a motor revolving a drum covered with smoked paper, on which curves of pressure, etc., may be traced.

Everyone professionally concerned with the details of printed English can be grateful to the new Webster for linking the parts of various expressions that have been either hyphenated compounds or separate words—*highlight*, *highbrow* and *lowbrow*, *overall*, *wise-crack*, *lowercase* and *uppercase*, and so on. Some of the unions now recognized were long overdue; many editors have already got them written into codes of house usage. But outside this small province the new work is a copy editor's despair, a propounder of endless riddles.

What, for example, are we to make of the common abbreviations *i.e.* and *e.g.*?² The first is entered in the vocabulary as *ie* (no periods, no space), the second as *e g* (space, no periods). In the preliminary list, "Abbreviations Used in This Dictionary," both are given the customary periods. (Oddly, the list translates its *i.e.* into "that is," but merely expands *e.g.* into "exempli gratia.") Is one to follow the vocabulary or the list? What point has the seeming inconsistency?

And what about capitalization? All vocabulary entries are in lowercase except for such abbreviations as ARW (air raid warden), MAB (medical advisory board), and PX (post exchange). Words possibly inviting capitalization are followed by such injunctions as *cap*, *usu cap*, *sometimes not cap*, *usu cap* 1st A, *usu cap* A&B. (One of the small idiosyncrasies is that "*usu*," the most frequent abbreviation, is given a period when roman, denied it when italic.) From *america*, adjective—all proper nouns are excluded—to *american* yew there are over 175 consecutive entries that require such injunctions; would it not have been simpler and more economical to capitalize the entries? A flat "*cap*," of course, means "always capitalized." But how often is "usually," and when is "sometimes"? We get dictionaries expressly that they may settle such problems for us. This dictionary seems to make a virtue of leaving them in flux, with the explanation that many matters are subjective and that the individual must decide them for himself—a curious abro-

gation of authority in a work extolled as "more useful and authoritative than any previous dictionary."

The rock-bottom practical truth is that the lexicographer cannot abrogate his authority if he wants to. He may think of himself as a detached scientist reporting the facts of language, declining to recommend use of anything or abstention from anything; but the myriad consultants of his work are not going to see him so. He helps create, not a book of fads and fancies and private opinions, but a Dictionary of the English Language. It comes to every reader under auspices that say, not "Take it or leave it," but rather something like this: "Here in 8000 columns is a definitive report of what a synod of the most trustworthy American experts consider the English language to be in the seventh decade of the twentieth century. This is your language; take it and use it. And if you use it in conformity with the principles and practices here exemplified, your use will be the most accurate attainable by any American of this era." The fact that the compilers disclaim authority and piously refrain from judgments is meaningless: the work itself, by virtue of its inclusions and exclusions, its mere existence, is a whole universe of judgments, received by millions as the Word from on high.

And there we have the reason why it is so important for the dictionary maker to keep his discriminations sharp, why it is so damaging if he lets them get out of working order. Suppose he enters a new definition for no better reason than that some careless, lazy, or uninformed scribbler has jumped to an absurd conclusion about what a word means or has been too harassed to run down the word he really wanted. This new definition is going to persuade tens of thousands that, say, *cohort*, a word of multitude, means one associate or crony "(he and three alleged housebreaking cohorts were arraigned on attempted burglary charges)" or that the vogue word *ambivalence*, which denotes simultaneous love and hatred of someone or something, means "continual oscillation between one thing and its opposite (novels . . . vitiated by an ambivalence between satire and sentimentalism)." To what is the definer contributing if not to subversion and decay? To the swallower of the definition it never occurs that he can have drunk corruption from a well that he has every reason to trust as the ultimate in purity. Multiply him by the number of people simultaneously influenced, and the resulting figure by the years through which the influence continues, and a great deal of that product by the in-

fluences that will be disseminated through speech and writing and teaching, and you begin to apprehend the scope of the really enormous disaster that can and will be wrought by the lexicographer's abandonment of his responsibility.

But What's a Dictionary For?

BERGEN EVANS

THE STORM OF ABUSE in the popular press that greeted the appearance of *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* is a curious phenomenon. Never has a scholarly work of this stature been attacked with such unbridled fury and contempt. An article in the *Atlantic* viewed it as a "disappointment," a "shock," a "calamity," "a scandal and a disaster." The *New York Times*, in a special editorial, felt that the work would "accelerate the deterioration" of the language and sternly accused the editors of betraying a public trust. The *Journal* of the American Bar Association saw the publication as "deplorable," "a flagrant example of lexicographic irresponsibility," "a serious blow to the cause of good English." *Life* called it "a nonword deluge," "monstrous," "abominable," and "a cause for dismay." They doubted that "Lincoln could have modelled his Gettysburg Address" on it—a concept of how things get written that throws very little light on Lincoln but a great deal on *Life*.

What underlies all this sound and fury? Is the claim of the G. & C. Merriam Company, probably the world's greatest dictionary maker, that the preparation of the work cost \$3.5 million, that it required the efforts of three hundred scholars over a period of twenty-seven years, working on the largest collection of citations ever assembled in any language—is all this a fraud, a hoax?

So monstrous a discrepancy in evaluation requires us to examine basic principles. Just what's a dictionary for? What does it propose to do? What does the common reader go to a dictionary to find? What has the purchaser of a dictionary a right to expect for his money?

Before we look at basic principles, it is necessary to interpose

two brief statements. The first of these is that a dictionary is concerned with words. Some dictionaries give various kinds of other useful information. Some have tables of weights and measures on the flyleaves. Some list historical events, and some, home remedies. And there's nothing wrong with their so doing. But the great increase in our vocabulary in the past three decades compels all dictionaries to make more efficient use of their space. And if something must be eliminated, it is sensible to throw out these extraneous things and stick to words.

Yet wild wails arose. The *Saturday Review* lamented that one can no longer find the goddess Astarte under a separate heading—though they point out that a genus of mollusks named after the goddess is included! They seemed to feel that out of sheer perversity the editors of the dictionary stooped to mollusks while ignoring goddesses and that, in some way, this typifies modern lexicography. Mr. Wilson Follett, folletizing (his mental processes demand some special designation) in the *Atlantic*, cried out in horror that one is not even able to learn from the Third International “that the Virgin was Mary the mother of Jesus”!

The second brief statement is that there has been even more progress in the making of dictionaries in the past thirty years than there has been in the making of automobiles. The difference, for example, between the much-touted Second International (1934) and the much-clouted Third International (1961) is not like the difference between yearly models but like the difference between the horse and buggy and the automobile. Between the appearance of these two editions a whole new science related to the making of dictionaries, the science of descriptive linguistics, has come into being.

Modern linguistics gets its charter from Leonard Bloomfield's *Language* (1933). Bloomfield, for thirteen years professor of Germanic philology at the University of Chicago and for nine years professor of linguistics at Yale, was one of those inseminating scholars who can't be relegated to any department and don't dream of accepting established categories and procedures just because they're established. He was as much an anthropologist as a linguist, and his concepts of language were shaped not by Strunk's *Elements of Style* but by his knowledge of Cree Indian dialects.

The broad general findings of the new science are:

1. All languages are systems of human conventions, not systems

of natural laws. The first—and essential—step in the study of any language is observing and setting down precisely what happens when native speakers speak it.

2. Each language is unique in its pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. It cannot be described in terms of logic or of some theoretical, ideal language. It cannot be described in terms of any other language, or even in terms of its own past.

3. All languages are dynamic rather than static, and hence a “rule” in any language can only be a statement of contemporary practice. Change is constant—and normal.

4. “Correctness” can rest only upon usage, for the simple reason that there is nothing else for it to rest on. And all usage is relative.

From these propositions it follows that a dictionary is good only insofar as it is a comprehensive and accurate description of current usage. And to be comprehensive it must include some indication of social and regional associations.

New dictionaries are needed because English has changed more in the past two generations than at any other time in its history. It has had to adapt to extraordinary cultural and technological changes, two world wars, unparalleled changes in transportation and communication, and unprecedented movements of populations.

More subtly, but pervasively, it has changed under the influence of mass education and the growth of democracy. As written English is used by increasing millions and for more reasons than ever before, the language has become more utilitarian and more informal. Every publication in America today includes pages that would appear, to the purist of forty years ago, unbuttoned gibberish. Not that they are; they simply show that you can’t hold the language of one generation up as a model for the next.

It’s not that you mustn’t. You *can’t*. For example, in the issue in which *Life* stated editorially that it would follow the Second International, there were over forty words, constructions, and meanings which are in the Third International but not in the Second. The issue of the *New York Times* which hailed the Second International as the authority to which it would adhere and the Third International as a scandal and a betrayal which it would reject used one hundred and fifty-three separate words, phrases, and constructions which are listed in the Third International but not in the Second and nineteen others which are condemned in the Second. Many

of them are used many times, more than three hundred such uses in all. The *Washington Post*, in an editorial captioned "Keep Your Old Webster's," says, in the first sentence, "don't throw it away," and in the second, "hang on to it." But the old Webster's labels *don't* "colloquial" and doesn't include "hang on to," in this sense, at all.

In short, all of these publications are written in the language that the Third International describes, even the very editorials which scorn it. And this is no coincidence, because the Third International isn't setting up any new standards at all; it is simply describing what *Life*, the *Washington Post*, and the *New York Times* are doing. Much of the dictionary's material comes from these very publications, the *Times*, in particular, furnishing more of its illustrative quotations than any other newspaper.

And the papers have no choice. No journal or periodical could sell a single issue today if it restricted itself to the American language of twenty-eight years ago. It couldn't discuss half the things we are interested in, and its style would seem stiff and cumbrous. If the editorials were serious, the public—and the stockholders—have reason to be grateful that the writers on these publications are more literate than the editors.

And so back to our questions: what's a dictionary for, and how, in 1962, can it best do what it ought to do? The demands are simple. The common reader turns to a dictionary for information about the spelling, pronunciation, meaning, and proper use of words. He wants to know what is current and respectable. But he wants—and has a right to—the truth, the full truth. And the full truth about any language, and especially about American English today, is that there are many areas in which certainty is impossible and simplification is misleading.

Even in so settled a matter as spelling, a dictionary cannot always be absolute. *Theater* is ~~correct~~, but so is *theatre*. And so are *traveled* and *travelled*, *plow* and *plough*, *catalog* and *catalogue*, and scores of other variants. The reader may want a single certainty. He may have taken an unyielding position in an argument, he may have wagered in support of his conviction and may demand that the dictionary "settle" the matter. But neither his vanity nor his purse is any concern of the dictionary's; it must record the facts. And the fact here is that there are many words in our language which may be spelled, with equal correctness, in either of two ways.

So with pronunciation. A citizen listening to his radio might notice that James B. Conant, Bernard Baruch, and Dwight D. Eisenhower pronounce *economics* as ECKuhnomiiks, while A. Whitney Griswold, Adlai Stevenson, and Herbert Hoover pronounce it EEKuhnomiiks. He turns to the dictionary to see which of the two pronunciations is "right" and finds that they are both acceptable.

Has he been betrayed? Has the dictionary abdicated its responsibility? Should it say that one *must* speak like the president of Harvard or like the president of Yale, like the thirty-first President of the United States or like the thirty-fourth? Surely it's none of its business to make a choice. Not because of the distinction of these particular speakers; lexicography, like God, is no respecter of persons. But because so widespread and conspicuous a use of two pronunciations among people of this elevation shows that there *are* two pronunciations. Their speaking establishes the fact which the dictionary must record.

Among the "enormities" with which *Life* taxes the Third International is its listing of "the common mispronunciation" *height*. That it is labeled a "dialectal variant" seems, somehow, to compound the felony. But one hears the word so pronounced, and if one professes to give a full account of American English in the 1960s, one has to take some cognizance of it. All people do not possess *Life's* intuitive perception that the word is so "monstrous" that even to list it as a dialect variation is to merit scorn. Among these, by the way, was John Milton, who, in one of the greatest passages in all literature, besought the Holy Spirit to raise him to the "highth" of his great argument. And even the *Oxford English Dictionary* is so benighted as to list it, in full boldface, right alongside of *Height* as a variant that has been in the language since at least 1290.

Now there are still, apparently, millions of Americans who retain, in this as in much else, some of the speech of Milton. This particular pronunciation seems to be receding, but the *American Dialect Dictionary* still records instances of it from almost every state on the Eastern seaboard and notes that it is heard from older people and "occasionally in educated speech," "common with good speakers," "general," "widespread."

Under these circumstances, what is a dictionary to do? Since millions speak the word this way, the pronunciation can't be ignored. Since it has been in use as long as we have any record of English

and since it has been used by the greatest writers, it can't be described as substandard or slang. But it is heard now only in certain localities. That makes it a dialectal pronunciation, and an honest dictionary will list it as such. What else can it do? Should it do?

The average purchaser of a dictionary uses it most often, probably, to find out what a word "means." As a reader, he wants to know what an author intended to convey. As a speaker or writer, he wants to know what a word will convey to his auditors. And this, too, is complex, subtle, and forever changing.

An illustration is furnished by an editorial in the *Washington Post* (January 17, 1962). After a ringing appeal to those who "love truth and accuracy" and the usual bombinations about "abdication of authority" and "barbarism," the editorial charges the Third International with "pretentious and obscure verbosity" and specifically instances its definition of "so simple an object as a door."

The definition reads:

a movable piece of firm material or a structure supported usually along one side and swinging on pivots or hinges, sliding along a groove, rolling up and down, revolving as one of four leaves, or folding like an accordion by means of which an opening may be closed or kept open for passage into or out of a building, room, or other covered enclosure or a car, airplane, elevator, or other vehicle.

Then follows a series of special meanings, each particularly defined and, where necessary, illustrated by a quotation.

Since, aside from roaring and admonishing the "gentlemen from Springfield" that "accuracy and brevity are virtues," the *Post's* editorial fails to explain what is wrong with the definition, we can only infer from "so simple" a thing that the writer takes the plain, downright, man-in-the-street attitude that a door is a door and any damn fool knows that.

But if so, he has walked into one of lexicography's biggest booby traps: the belief that the obvious is easy to define. Whereas the opposite is true. Anyone can give a fair description of the strange, the new, or the unique. It's the commonplace, the habitual, that challenges definition, for its very commonness compels us to define it in uncommon terms. Dr. Johnson was ridiculed on just this score when his dictionary appeared in 1755. For two hundred years his definition of a network as "any thing reticulated or decussated, at equal distances, with interstices between the intersections" has been

good for a laugh. But in the merriment one thing is always overlooked: no one has yet come up with a better definition! Subsequent dictionaries defined it as a mesh and then defined a mesh as a network. That's simple, all right.

Anyone who attempts sincerely to state what the word *door* means in the United States of America today can't take refuge in a log cabin. There has been an enormous proliferation of closing and demarking devices and structures in the past twenty years, and anyone who tries to thread his way through the many meanings now included under *door* may have to sacrifice brevity to accuracy and even have to employ words that a limited vocabulary may find obscure.

Is the entrance to a tent a door, for instance? And what of the thing that seals the exit of an airplane? Is this a door? Or what of those sheets and jets of air that are now being used, in place of old-fashioned oak and hinges, to screen entrances and exits. Are they doors? And what of those accordion-like things that set off various sections of many modern apartments? The fine print in the lease takes it for granted that they are doors and that spaces demarked by them are rooms—and the rent is computed on the number of rooms.

Was I gypped by the landlord when he called the folding contraption that shuts off my kitchen a door? I go to the Second International, which the editor of the *Post* urges me to use in preference to the Third International. Here I find that a door is

The movable frame or barrier of boards, or other material, usually turning on hinges or pivots or sliding, by which an entrance-way into a house or apartment is closed and opened; also, a similar part of a piece of furniture, as in a cabinet or bookcase.

This is only forty-six words, but though it includes the cellar door, it excludes the barn door and the accordion-like thing.

So I go on to the Third International. I see at once that the new definition is longer. But I'm looking for accuracy, and if I must sacrifice brevity to get it, then I must. And, sure enough, in the definition which raised the *Post's* blood pressure, I find the words "folding like an accordion." The thing *is* a door, and my landlord is using the word in one of its currently accepted meanings.

We don't turn to a work of reference merely for confirmation. We all have words in our vocabularies which we have misunder-

stood, and to come on the true meaning of one of these words is quite a shock. All our complacency and self-esteem rise to oppose the discovery. But eventually we must accept the humiliation and laugh it off as best we can.

Some, often those who have set themselves up as authorities, stick to their error and charge the dictionary with being in a conspiracy against them. They are sure that their meaning is the only "right" one. And when the dictionary doesn't bear them out they complain about "permissive" attitudes instead of correcting their mistake.

The *New York Times* and the *Saturday Review* both regarded as contemptibly "permissive" the fact that one meaning of one word was illustrated by a quotation from Polly Adler. But a rudimentary knowledge of the development of any language would have told them that the underworld has been a far more active force in shaping and enriching speech than all the synods that have ever convened. Their attitude is like that of the patriot who canceled his subscription to the *Dictionary of American Biography* when he discovered that the very first volume included Benedict Arnold!

The ultimate of "permissiveness," singled out by almost every critic for special scorn, was the inclusion in the Third International of *finalize*. It was this, more than any other one thing, that was given as the reason for sticking to the good old Second International—that "peerless authority on American English," as the *Times* called it. But if it was such an authority, why didn't they look into it? They would have found *finalize* if they had.

And why shouldn't it be there? It exists. It's been recorded for two generations. Millions employ it every day. Two Presidents of the United States—men of widely differing cultural backgrounds—have used it in formal statements. And so has the Secretary-General of the United Nations, a man of unusual linguistic attainments. It isn't permitting the word but omitting it that would break faith with the reader. Because it is exactly the sort of word we want information about.

To list it as substandard would be to imply that it is used solely by the ignorant and the illiterate. But this would be a misrepresentation: President Kennedy and U Thant are highly educated men, and both are articulate and literate. It isn't even a freak form. On the contrary, it is a classic example of a regular process of de-

velopment in English, a process which has given us such thoroughly accepted words as *generalize*, *minimize*, *formalize*, and *verbalize*. Nor can it be dismissed on logical grounds or on the ground that it is a mere duplication of *complete*. It says something that *complete* doesn't say and says it in a way that is significant in the modern bureaucratic world: one usually *completes* something which he has initiated but *finalizes* the work of others.

One is free to dislike the word. I don't like it. But the editor of a dictionary has to examine the evidence for a word's existence and seek it in context to get, as clearly and closely as he can, the exact meaning that it conveys to those who use it. And if it is widely used by well-educated, literate, reputable people, he must list it as a standard word. He is not compiling a volume of his own prejudices.

An individual's use of his native tongue is the surest index to his position within his community. And those who turn to a dictionary expect from it some statement of the current status of a word or a grammatical construction. And it is with the failure to assume this function that modern lexicography has been most fiercely charged. The charge is based on a naïve assumption that simple labels can be attached in all instances. But they can't. Some words are standard in some constructions and not in others. There may be as many shades of status as of meaning, and modern lexicography instead of abdicating this function has fulfilled it to a degree utterly unknown to earlier dictionaries.

Consider the word *fetch*, meaning to "go get and bring to." Until recently a standard word of full dignity ("Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel"—I Kings 17:10), it has become slightly tainted. Perhaps the command latent in it is resented as undemocratic. Or maybe its use in training dogs to retrieve has made some people feel that it is an undignified word to apply to human beings. But, whatever the reason, there is a growing uncertainty about its status, and hence it is the sort of word that conscientious people look up in a dictionary.

Will they find it labeled "good" or "bad"? Neither, of course, because either applied indiscriminately would be untrue. The Third International lists nineteen different meanings of the verb *to fetch*. Of these some are labeled "dialectal," some "chiefly dialectal," some "obsolete," one "chiefly Scottish," and two "not in formal use." The primary meaning—"to go after and bring back"—is not labeled and

hence can be accepted as standard, accepted with the more assurance because the many shades of labeling show us that the word's status has been carefully considered.

On grammatical questions the Third International tries to be equally exact and thorough. Sometimes a construction is listed without comment, meaning that in the opinion of the editors it is unquestionably respectable. Sometimes a construction carries the comment "used by speakers and writers on all educational levels though disapproved by some grammarians." Or the comment may be "used in substandard speech and formerly also by reputable writers." Or "less often in standard than in substandard speech." Or simply "dial."

And this very accurate reporting is based on evidence which is presented for our examination. One may feel that the evidence is inadequate or that the evaluation of it is erroneous. But surely, in the face of classification so much more elaborate and careful than any known heretofore, one cannot fly into a rage and insist that the dictionary is "out to destroy . . . every vestige of linguistic punctilio . . . every criterion for distinguishing between better usages and worse."

Words, as we have said, are continually shifting their meanings and connotations and hence their status. A word which has dignity, say, in the vocabulary of an older person may go down in other people's estimation. Like *fetch*. The older speaker is not likely to be aware of this and will probably be inclined to ascribe the snickers of the young at his speech to that degeneration of manners which every generation has deplored in its juniors. But a word which is coming up in the scale—like *jazz*, say, or, more recently, *crap*—will strike his ear at once. We are much more aware of offenses given us than of those we give. And if he turns to a dictionary and finds the offending word listed as standard—or even listed, apparently—his response is likely to be an outburst of indignation.

But the dictionary can neither snicker nor fulminate. It records. It will offend many, no doubt, to find the expression *wise up*, meaning to inform or to become informed, listed in the Third International with no restricting label. To my aging ears it still sounds like slang. But the evidence—quotations from the *Kiplinger Washington Letter* and the *Wall Street Journal*—convinces me that it is I who am out of step, lagging behind. If such publications have taken to using *wise up* in serious contexts, with no punctuational

indication of irregularity, then it is obviously respectable. And finding it so listed and supported, I can only say that it's nice to be informed and sigh to realize that I am becoming an old fogey. But, of course, I don't have to use it (and I'll be damned if I will! "Let them smile, as I do now, At the old forsaken bough Where I cling").

In part, the trouble is due to the fact that there is no standard for standard. Ideas of what is proper to use in serious, dignified speech and writing are changing—and with breathtaking rapidity. This is one of the major facts of contemporary American English. But it is no more the dictionary's business to oppose this process than to speed it up.

Even in our standard speech some words are more dignified and some more informal than others, and dictionaries have tried to guide us through these uncertainties by marking certain words and constructions as "colloquial," meaning "inappropriate in a formal situation." But this distinction, in the opinion of most scholars, has done more harm than good. It has created the notion that these particular words are inferior, when actually they might be the best possible words in an informal statement. And so—to the rage of many reviewers—the Third International has dropped this label. Not all labels, as angrily charged, but only this one out of a score. And the doing so may have been an error, but it certainly didn't constitute "betrayal" or "abandoning of all distinctions." It was intended to end a certain confusion.

In all the finer shades of meaning, of which the status of a word is only one, the user is on his own, whether he likes it or not. Despite *Life's* artless assumption about the Gettysburg Address, nothing worth writing is written *from* a dictionary. The dictionary, rather, comes along afterwards and describes what *has been* written.

Words in themselves are not dignified, or silly, or wise, or malicious. But they can be used in dignified, silly, wise, or malicious ways by dignified, silly, wise, or malicious people. *Egghead*, for example, is a perfectly legitimate word, as legitimate as *highbrow* or *long-haired*. But there is something very wrong and very undignified, by civilized standards, in a belligerent dislike for intelligence and education. *Yak* is an amusing word for persistent chatter. Anyone could say, "We were just yakking over a cup of coffee," with no harm to his dignity. But to call a Supreme Court decision *yakking* is to be vulgarly insulting and so, undignified. Again, there's

nothing wrong with *confab* when it's appropriate. But when the work of a great research project, employing hundreds of distinguished scholars over several decades and involving the honor of one of the greatest publishing houses in the world, is described as *confabbing* (as the *New York Times* editorially described the preparation of the Third International), the use of this particular word asserts that the lexicographers had merely sat around and talked idly. And the statement becomes undignified—if not, indeed, slanderous.

The lack of dignity in such statements is not in the words, nor in the dictionaries that list them, but in the hostility that deliberately seeks this tone of expression. And in expressing itself the hostility frequently shows that those who are expressing it don't know how to use a dictionary. Most of the reviewers seem unable to read the Third International and unwilling to read the Second.

The *American Bar Association Journal*, for instance, in a typical outburst ("a deplorable abdication of responsibility"), picked out for special scorn the inclusion in the Third International of the word *irregardless*. "As far as the new Webster's is concerned," said the *Journal*, "this meaningless verbal bastard is just as legitimate as any other word in the dictionary." Thirty seconds spent in examining the book they were so roundly condemning would have shown them that in it *irregardless* is labeled "nonstand"—which means "nonstandard," which means "not conforming to the usage generally characteristic of educated native speakers of the language." Is that "just as legitimate as any other word in the dictionary"?

The most disturbing fact of all is that the editors of a dozen of the most influential publications in America today are under the impression that *authoritative* must mean *authoritarian*. Even the "permissive" Third International doesn't recognize this identification—editors' attitudes being not yet, fortunately, those of the American people. But the Fourth International may have to.

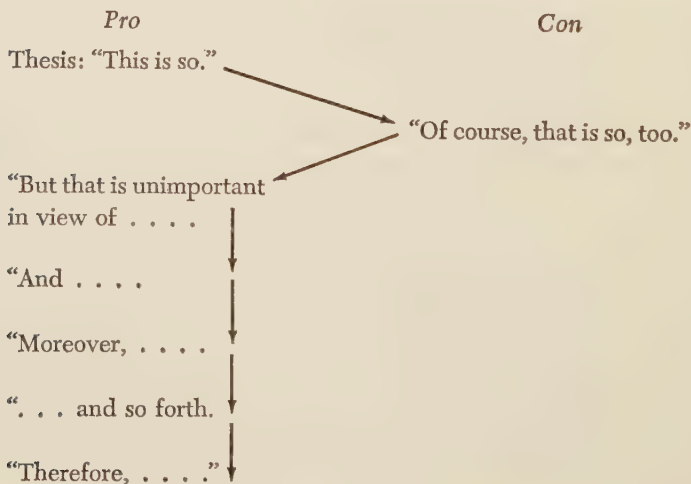
The new dictionary may have many faults. Nothing that tries to meet an ever-changing situation over a terrain as vast as contemporary English can hope to be free of them. And much in it is open to honest, and informed, disagreement. There can be linguistic objection to the eradication of proper names. The removal of guides to pronunciation from the foot of every page may not have been worth the valuable space it saved. The new method of defining words of many meanings has disadvantages as well as advan-

tages. And of the half million or more definitions, hundreds, possibly thousands, may seem inadequate or imprecise. To some (of whom I am one) the omission of the label "colloquial" will seem meritorious; to others it will seem a loss.

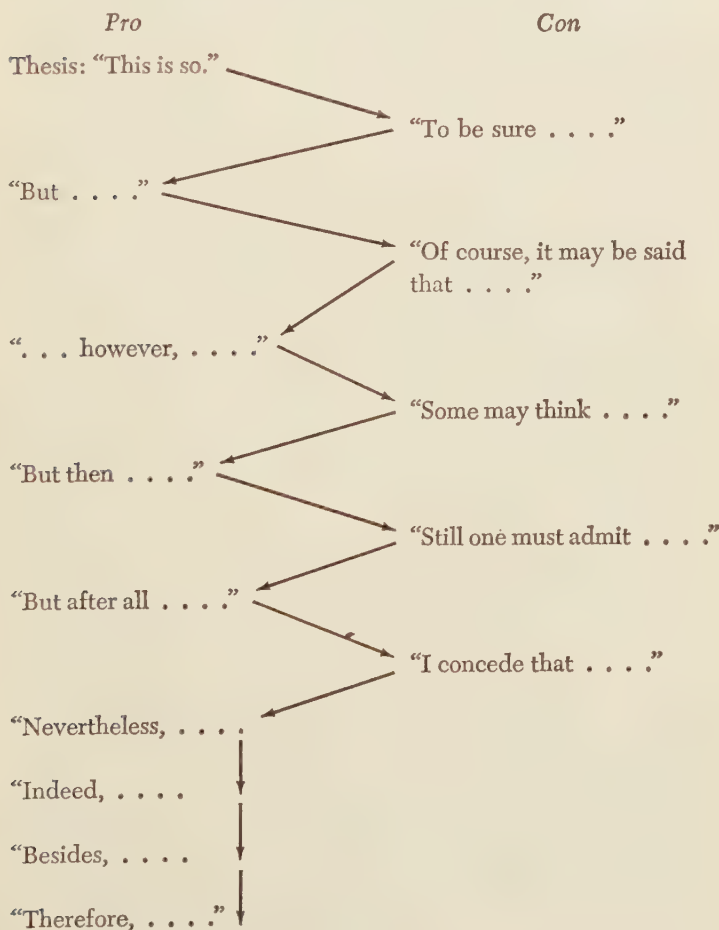
But one thing is certain: anyone who solemnly announces in the year 1962 that he will be guided in matters of English usage by a dictionary published in 1934 is talking ignorant and pretentious nonsense.

SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING

1. Write an essay attacking or defending one aspect of *Webster III*: its system of defining, its omission of proper names, its idea of correctness, its allotment of space to citations or examples, or any other of its procedures. Use a *simple pro-and-con structure*, as follows. Write an introductory paragraph that ends with an assertion of your thesis: "Although occasionally awkward, *Webster III*'s system of definition is thorough, logical, and useful." Now write a paragraph of concession to the *con* viewpoint: "Of course, some of the definitions are cumbersome." And so on to the end of the paragraph, including every conceivable objection. Then back to your main line: "But in a dictionary, thoroughness is better than grace." The structure might be diagrammed something like this:



2. Write an essay supporting either Mr. Follett or Mr. Evans against the other: "Although Mr. A makes a strong case, Mr. B is nearer the truth of the matter." Now, since the opposition is more considerable, use a *complex pro-and-con structure*—a series of *con's* and *pro's*—to demolish the opposition point by point. Each paragraph may be a small argument that presents the opposition, then knocks it flat. Swing your argument back and forth, using phrases like *To be sure, I admit*, and *On the other hand*—making sure to end each swing on your own side. Then add a good thumping paragraph of conclusion. The structural line might look something like this:



You might check in *Webster III* some of the evidence Mr. Follett cites. Has he omitted anything pertinent from his citations? Since Mr. Evans, with the last word, ends in the psychologically stronger position, you might ask yourself which of Mr. Follett's charges he may not have considered, or may not have answered squarely, and what Mr. Follett might have said in rebuttal.

Here are some quotations bearing on the controversy:

A passel of double-domes at the G. & C. Merriam Company joint in Springfield, Mass., have been confabbing and yakking for twenty-seven years—which is not intended to infer that they have not been doing plenty work—and now they have finalized Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged, a new edition of that swell and esteemed word book.

Those who regard the foregoing paragraph as acceptable English prose will find that the new Webster's is just the dictionary for them.

New York Times (*October 12, 1961*), p. 28.

With a real understanding of the difference between the spoken and written language, it should be obvious that we should never allow our students to write "just the way they talk" any more than we should try to teach them to talk the way they *have* to learn to write. The failure to see and to understand the distinction between standard colloquial speech and the literary language, and the failure to understand the relationship between speech and writing have been, I am convinced, the chief obstacle in imparting to our students both real literacy and a confident competence in speaking. Traditional grammar has been based, understandably enough, on the literary language, but far too often the prescriptive rules which must be followed if we are to *write* acceptably have been used as a basis for how we should *talk*.

Henry Lee Smith, "*The Teacher and the World of Language*," *College English* (1959), p. 173.

The objection that not many mid-century authors deserve quotation has already been answered, for it is only another form of the notion that the lexicographer should be a lawgiver and not a historian.

James Sledd, "*The Lexicographer's Uneasy Chair*," *College English* (1962), p. 684.

. . . the new philosophy, linguistic and otherwise, seems to be summed up in this formula: "What is is good, simply because it is." Good and bad, right and wrong, correct and incorrect no longer exist. Any reference to any of these descriptive adjectives is a value judgment, and unworthy of the scientific attitude, which prescribes that we merely observe and catalogue the facts, carefully refraining from expressing either judgment or preference.

Mario Pei, "*The Dictionary as Battlefield*," Saturday Review of Literature (July 21, 1962), p. 45.

Perhaps distinctions among styles are now indeed less clear and stable than they were in a less troubled age; perhaps the clumsier writers do ignore the existing distinctions while the sophisticated use them to play sophisticated tunes; perhaps the scrupulously objective lexicographer cannot establish those distinctions from his quotation slips alone. For all that, distinctions do exist. They exist in good writing, and they exist in the linguistic consciousness of the educated. Dr. Gove's definers prove they exist when they give *egghead* as a synonym for *double-dome* but then define *egghead* in impeccably formal terms as "one with intellectual interests or pretensions" or as "a highly educated person." Such opposition between theory and practice strikes even a timid and generally admiring reviewer as rather odd, as though some notion of scientific objectivity should require the scientist to deny that he knows what he knows because he may not know how he knows it.

Sledd, p. 685.

[In *Webster III*] *jerk* is standard for "a stupid, foolish, naïve, or unconventional person." One imagines the themes: "Dr. Johnson admired Goldsmith's literary talent although he considered him a jerk."

Dwight Macdonald, "*The String Untuned*," The New Yorker (March 10, 1962), p. 157.

There is no doubt in my mind that widespread localisms, slang, vulgarisms, colloquialisms, even obscenities and improprieties, should be duly noted in a comprehensive dictionary, whose first duty is to record what goes on in the field of language. Should such forms be labeled and described for

what they are, not in a spirit of condemnation, but merely for the guidance of the reader? That, too, seems reasonable. If this procedure helps slow up the inevitable process of language change by encouraging the speakers to use what the older dictionaries call standard forms, and discouraging them from using substandard forms, this impresses me as a distinct advantage. Too rapid and too widespread language change is a hindrance to communications. . . . There is no question that within the next 500 years the English language, along with all other languages spoken today, will be so changed as to be practically unrecognizable. This will happen whether we like it or not. But need we deliberately hasten and amplify the process? Between sudden revolution and stolid reaction there is a middle ground of sound conservatism and orderly change.

Pei, pp. 55-56.

3 / Middle Tactics:

The Vector of Interest

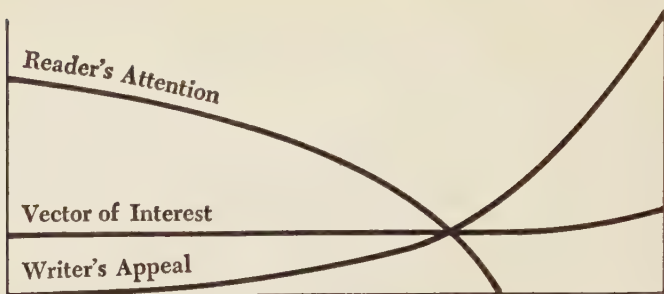
Man Against Darkness • W. T. STACE

The Mystic's Experience of God • RUFUS M. JONES

Plato and Bacon • THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

AN ESSAY'S BEGINNING and its end are important, since they set the thesis and round it to conclusion. We shall look at beginnings and ends closely in the next chapter, when we consider the different kinds of paragraph. But the middle, the bulk of the essay, requires tactics that may differ considerably from the *pro's* and *con's* we have already seen. The three essays in this section will illustrate some of the differences. Their theses lie deeper than controversy; the opposition is only a shadowy bystander, with little of the structural force to be seen in Follett and Evans. But the essays will also show that one tactical principle underlies any effective structural order a writer can think of: to keep the reader interested, save the best for last.

Since the reader sees more clearly at each step into the essay, his interest naturally declines. The writer must therefore push upward to keep the vector of the reader's interest at least on the horizontal, with no sag and preferably with an upward swing:



Therefore, in developing the middle of an essay, make each item more interesting than its predecessor, saving best till last.

This is the ideal. Study these three essays to see how well the writers have fulfilled it. Notice also the different kinds of order. After a paragraph on Sartre to clarify his thesis, Stace uses an historical arrangement to illustrate his first point, moving backward in time from Darwin to Plato, and then forward again to Galileo and modern man. Next he shifts to a reasonable progression, from what he thinks least important (religion) to what he thinks most important (moral courage). Jones, too, moves from least to most: from mundane mysticisms to knowledge of God, with its "slow laboratory effects." Notice his thesis (second paragraph), and the way his demonstration so snugly fits it.

Though the selection from Macaulay stands on its own thesis ("To understand Bacon's contribution compare him with Plato"), it is really the middle of a longer essay. Macaulay, too, follows an order of rising interest. But more especially, notice his tactics of contrast. He does not write all about Plato, then all about Bacon. He develops his contrast not author by author, but idea by idea, making each idea bear on *both* authors—a phrase for one, a phrase for the other; a paragraph for one, a paragraph for the other. This is an essential tactical point in any extended contrast.

Man Against Darkness

W. T. STACE

THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS of America recently issued a statement in which they said that the chaotic and bewildered state of the modern world is due to man's loss of faith, his abandonment of God and religion. For my part I believe in no religion at all. Yet I entirely agree with the bishops. It is an oversimplification to speak of *the* cause of so complex a state of affairs as the tortured condition of the world today. Its causes are doubtless multitudinous. Yet allowing for some element of oversimplification, I say that the bishops' assertion is substantially true.

Jean-Paul Sartre, the French existentialist philosopher, labels himself an atheist. Yet his views seem to me plainly to support the statement of the bishops. So long as there was believed to be a God in the sky, he says, men could regard him as the source of their moral ideals. The universe, created and governed by a fatherly God, was a friendly habitation for man. We could be sure that, however great the evil in the world, good in the end would triumph and the forces of evil would be routed. With the disappearance of God from the sky all this has changed. Since the world is not ruled by a spiritual being, but rather by blind forces, there cannot be any ideals, moral or otherwise, in the universe outside us. Our ideals, therefore, must proceed only from our own minds; they are our own inventions. Thus the world which surrounds us is nothing but an immense spiritual emptiness. It is a dead universe. We do not live in a universe which is on the side of our values. It is completely indifferent to them.

There is a popular belief that some particular scientific discoveries or theories, such as the Darwinian theory of evolution, or the views of geologists about the age of the earth, or a series of such discoveries, have done the damage. It would be foolish to deny that these discoveries have had a great effect in undermining religious dogmas. But this account does not at all go to the heart of

the matter. Religion can probably outlive any scientific discoveries which could be made. It can accommodate itself to them. The root cause of the decay of faith has not been any particular discovery of science, but rather the general spirit of science and certain basic assumptions upon which modern science, from the seventeenth century onward, has proceeded.

It was Galileo and Newton—notwithstanding that Newton himself was a deeply religious man—who destroyed the old comfortable picture of a friendly universe governed by spiritual values. And this was effected, not by Newton's discovery of the law of gravitation nor by any of Galileo's brilliant investigations, but by the general picture of the world which these men and others of their time made the basis of the science, not only of their own day, but of all succeeding generations down to the present. That is why the century immediately following Newton, the eighteenth century, was notoriously an age of religious skepticism. Skepticism did not have to wait for the discoveries of Darwin and the geologists in the nineteenth century. It flooded the world immediately after the age of the rise of science.

Neither the Copernican hypothesis nor any of Newton's or Galileo's particular discoveries were the real causes. Religious faith might well have accommodated itself to the new astronomy. The real turning point between the medieval age of faith and the modern age of unfaith came when the scientists of the seventeenth century turned their backs upon what used to be called "final causes." The final cause of a thing or event meant the purpose which it was supposed to serve in the universe, its cosmic purpose. What lay back of this was the presupposition that there is a cosmic order or plan and that everything which exists could in the last analysis be explained in terms of its place in this cosmic plan, that is, in terms of its purpose.

Plato and Aristotle believed this, and so did the whole medieval Christian world. For instance, if it were true that the sun and the moon were created and exist for the purpose of giving light to man, then this fact would explain why the sun and the moon exist. We might not be able to discover the purpose of everything, but everything must have a purpose. Belief in final causes thus amounted to a belief that the world is governed by purposes, presumably the purposes of some overruling mind. This belief was not the invention of Christianity. It was basic to the whole of Western civiliza-

tion, whether in the ancient pagan world or in Christendom, from the time of Socrates to the rise of science in the seventeenth century.

The founders of modern science—for instance, Galileo, Kepler, and Newton—were mostly pious men who did not doubt God's purposes. Nevertheless they took the revolutionary step of consciously and deliberately expelling the idea of purpose as controlling nature from their new science of nature. They did this on the ground that inquiry into purposes is useless for what science aims at: namely, the prediction and control of events. To predict an eclipse, what you have to know is not its purpose but its causes. Hence science from the seventeenth century onward became exclusively an inquiry into causes. The conception of purpose in the world was ignored and frowned on. This, though silent and almost unnoticed, was the greatest revolution in human history, far outweighing in importance any of the political revolutions whose thunder has reverberated through the world.

For it came about in this way that for the past three hundred years there has been growing up in men's minds, dominated as they are by science, a new imaginative picture of the world. The world, according to this new picture, is purposeless, senseless, meaningless. Nature is nothing but matter in motion. The motions of matter are governed, not by any purpose, but by blind forces and laws. Nature on this view says Whitehead—to whose writings I am indebted in this part of my paper—is "merely the hurrying of material, endlessly, meaninglessly." You can draw a sharp line across the history of Europe dividing it into two epochs of very unequal length. The line passes through the lifetime of Galileo. European man before Galileo—whether ancient pagan or more recent Christian—thought of the world as controlled by plan and purpose. After Galileo, European man thinks of it as utterly purposeless.

It is this which has killed religion. Religion could survive the discoveries that the sun, not the earth, is the center; that men are descended from simian ancestors; that the earth is hundreds of millions of years old. These discoveries may render out of date some of the details of older theological dogmas, may force their restatement in new intellectual frameworks. But they do not touch the essence of the religious vision itself, which is the faith that there is plan and purpose in the world, that the world is a moral order, that in the end all things are for the best. This faith may express

itself through many different intellectual dogmas, those of Christianity, of Hinduism, of Islam. All and any of these intellectual dogmas may be destroyed without destroying the essential religious spirit. But that spirit cannot survive destruction of belief in a plan and purpose of the world, for that is the very heart of it. Religion can get on with any sort of astronomy, geology, biology, physics. But it cannot get on with a purposeless and meaningless universe.

If the scheme of things is purposeless and meaningless, then the life of man is purposeless and meaningless too. Everything is futile, all effort is in the end worthless. A man may, of course, still pursue disconnected ends, money, fame, art, science, and may gain pleasure from them. But his life is hollow at the center. Hence the dissatisfied, disillusioned restless spirit of modern man.

The picture of a meaningless world, and a meaningless human life, is, I think, the basic theme of much modern art and literature. Certainly it is the basic theme of modern philosophy. According to the most characteristic philosophies of the modern period from Hume in the eighteenth century to the so-called positivists of today, the world is just what it is, and that is the end of all inquiry. There is no reason for its being what it is. Everything might just as well have been quite different, and there would have been no reason for that either. When you have stated what things are, what things the world contains, there is nothing more which could be said, even by an omniscient being. To ask any question about *why* things are thus, or what purpose their being so serves, is to ask a senseless question, because they serve no purpose at all. For instance, there is for modern philosophy no such thing as the ancient problem of evil. For this once famous question presupposes that pain and misery, though they seem so inexplicable and irrational to us, must ultimately subserve some rational purpose, must have their places in the cosmic plan. But this is nonsense. There is no such overruling rationality in the universe. Belief in the ultimate irrationality of everything is the quintessence of what is called the modern mind.

It is true that, parallel with these philosophies which are typical of the modern mind, preaching the meaninglessness of the world, there has run a line of idealistic philosophies whose contention is that the world is after all spiritual in nature and that moral ideals and values are inherent in its structure. But most of these idealisms were simply philosophical expressions of romanticism,

which was itself no more than an unsuccessful counterattack of the religious against the scientific view of things. They perished, along with romanticism in literature and art, about the beginning of the present century, though of course they still have a few adherents.

At the bottom these idealistic systems of thought were rationalizations of man's wishful thinking. They were born of the refusal of men to admit the cosmic darkness. They were comforting illusions within the warm glow of which the more tender-minded intellectuals sought to shelter themselves from the icy winds of the universe. They lasted a little while. But they are shattered now, and we return once more to the vision of a purposeless world.

Along with the ruin of the religious vision there went the ruin of moral principles and indeed of all values. If there is a cosmic purpose, if there is in the nature of things a drive toward goodness, then our moral systems will derive their validity from this. But if our moral rules do not proceed from something outside us in the nature of the universe—whether we say it is God or simply the universe itself—then they must be our own inventions. Thus it came to be believed that moral rules must be merely an expression of our own likes and dislikes. But likes and dislikes are notoriously variable. What pleases one man, people, or culture displeases another. Therefore morals are wholly relative.

This obvious conclusion from the idea of a purposeless world made its appearance in Europe immediately after the rise of science, for instance in the philosophy of Hobbes. Hobbes saw at once that if there is no purpose in the world there are no values either. "Good and evil," he wrote, "are names that signify our appetites and aversions; which in different tempers, customs, and doctrines of men are different values. Every man calleth that which pleaseth him, good; and that which displeaseth him, evil."

This doctrine of the relativity of morals, though it has recently received an impetus from the studies of anthropologists, was thus really implicit in the whole scientific mentality. It is disastrous for morals because it destroys their entire traditional foundation. That is why philosophers who see the danger signals, from the time at least of Kant, have been trying to give to morals a new foundation, that is, a secular or nonreligious foundation. This attempt may very well be intellectually successful. Such a foundation, independent of the religious view of the world, might well be found. But the

question is whether it can ever be a *practical* success, that is, whether apart from its logical validity and its influence with intellectuals, it can ever replace among the masses of men the lost religious foundation. On that question hangs perhaps the future of civilization. But meanwhile disaster is overtaking us.

The widespread belief in "ethical relativity" among philosophers, psychologists, ethnologists, and sociologists is the theoretical counterpart of the repudiation of principle which we see all around us, especially in international affairs, the field in which morals have always had the weakest foothold. No one any longer effectively believes in moral principles except as the private prejudices either of individual men or of nations or cultures. This is the inevitable consequence of the doctrine of ethical relativity, which in turn is the inevitable consequence of believing in a purposeless world.

Another characteristic of our spiritual state is loss of belief in the freedom of the will. This also is a fruit of the scientific spirit, though not of any particular scientific discovery. Science has been built up on the basis of determinism, which is the belief that every event is completely determined by a chain of causes and is therefore theoretically predictable beforehand. It is true that recent physics seems to challenge this. But so far as its practical consequences are concerned, the damage has long ago been done. A man's actions, it was argued, are as much events in the natural world as is an eclipse of the sun. It follows that men's actions are as theoretically predictable as an eclipse. But if it is certain now that John Smith will murder Joseph Jones at 2:15 P.M. on January 1, 1963, what possible meaning can it have to say that when that time comes John Smith will be *free* to choose whether he will commit the murder or not? And if he is not free, how can he be held responsible?

It is true that the whole of this argument can be shown by a competent philosopher to be a tissue of fallacies—or at least I claim that it can. But the point is that the analysis required to show this is much too subtle to be understood by the average entirely unphilosophical man. Because of this, the argument against free will is generally swallowed whole by the unphilosophical. Hence the thought that man is not free, that he is the helpless plaything of forces over which he has no control, has deeply penetrated the modern mind. We hear of economic determinism, cultural determinism, historical determinism. We are not responsible for what

we do because our glands control us or because we are the products of environment or heredity. Not moral self-control, but the doctor, the psychiatrist, the educationist, must save us from doing evil. Pills and injections in the future are to do what Christ and the prophets have failed to do. Of course I do not mean to deny that doctors and educationists can help. And I do not in any way mean to belittle their efforts. But I do wish to draw attention to the weakening of moral controls, the repudiation of personal responsibility which, in the popular thinking of the day, result from these tendencies of thought.

No civilization can live without ideals, or to put it in another way without a firm faith in moral ideas. Our ideals and moral ideas have in the past been rooted in religion. But the religious basis of our ideals has been undermined, and the superstructure of ideals is plainly tottering. None of the commonly suggested remedies on examination seems likely to succeed. It would therefore look as if the early death of our civilization were inevitable.

Of course we know that it is perfectly possible for individual men, very highly educated men, philosophers, scientists, intellectuals in general, to live moral lives without any religious convictions. But the question is whether a whole civilization, a whole family of peoples, composed almost entirely of relatively uneducated men and women, can do this. Of course, if we could make the vast majority of men as highly educated as the very few are now, we might save the situation. And we are already moving slowly in that direction through the techniques of mass education. But the critical question seems to concern the time lag. Perhaps in a few hundred years most of the population will, at the present rate, be sufficiently highly educated and civilized to combine high ideals with an absence of religion. But long before we reach any such stage, the collapse of our civilization may have come about. How are we to live through the intervening period?

I am sure that the first thing we have to do is to face the truth, however bleak it may be, and then next we have to learn to live with it. Let me say a word about each of these two points. What I am urging as regards the first is complete honesty. Those who wish to resurrect Christian dogmas are not, of course, consciously dishonest. But they have that kind of unconscious dishonesty which consists in lulling oneself with opiates and dreams. Those who talk of a new religion are merely hoping for a new opiate. Both alike

refuse to face the truth that there is, in the universe outside man, no spirituality, no regard for values, no friend in the sky, no help or comfort for man of any sort. To be perfectly honest in the admission of this fact, not to seek shelter in new or old illusions, not to indulge in wishful dreams about this matter, this is the first thing we shall have to do.

I do not urge this course out of any special regard for the sanctity of truth in the abstract. It is not self-evident to me that truth is the supreme value to which all else must be sacrificed. Might not the discoverer of a truth which would be fatal to mankind be justified in suppressing it, even in teaching men a falsehood? Is truth more valuable than goodness and beauty and happiness? To think so is to invent yet another absolute, another religious delusion in which Truth with a capital T is substituted for God. The reason why we must now boldly and honestly face the truth that the universe is nonspiritual and indifferent to goodness, beauty, happiness, or truth is not that it would be wicked to suppress it, but simply that it is too late to do so. In the end we cannot do anything else but face it. Yet we stand on the brink, dreading the icy plunge. We need courage. We need honesty.

Now about the other point, the necessity of learning to live with the truth. This means learning to live virtuously and happily, or at least contentedly, without illusions. And this is going to be extremely difficult because what we have now begun dimly to perceive is that human life in the past, or at least human happiness, has almost wholly depended upon illusions. It has been said that man lives by truth, and that the truth will make us free. Nearly the opposite seems to me to be the case. Mankind has managed to live only by means of lies, and the truth may very well destroy us. If one were a Bergsonian one might believe that nature deliberately puts illusions into our souls in order to induce us to go on living.

The illusions by which men have lived seem to be of two kinds. First, there is what one may perhaps call the Great Illusion—I mean the religious illusion that the universe is moral and good, that it follows a wise and noble plan, that it is gradually generating some supreme value, that goodness is bound to triumph in it. Secondly, there is a whole host of minor illusions on which human happiness nourishes itself. How much of human happiness notoriously comes from the illusions of the lover about his beloved? Then again we work and strive because of the illusions connected with fame,

glory, power, or money. Banners of all kinds, flags, emblems, insignia, ceremonials, and rituals are invariably symbols of some illusion or other. The British Empire, the connection between mother country and dominions, is partly kept going by illusions surrounding the notion of kingship. Or think of the vast amount of human happiness which is derived from the illusion of supposing that if some nonsense syllable, such as "sir" or "count" or "lord" is pronounced in conjunction with our names, we belong to a superior order of people.

There is plenty of evidence that human happiness is almost wholly based upon illusions of one kind or another. But the scientific spirit, or the spirit of truth, is the enemy of illusions and therefore the enemy of human happiness. That is why it is going to be so difficult to live with the truth.

There is no reason why we should have to give up the host of minor illusions which render life supportable. There is no reason why the lover should be scientific about the loved one. Even the illusions of fame and glory may persist. But without the Great Illusion, the illusion of a good, kindly, and purposeful universe, we shall *have* to learn to live. And to ask this is really no more than to ask that we become genuinely civilized beings and not merely sham civilized beings.

I can best explain the difference by a reminiscence. I remember a fellow student in my college days, an ardent Christian, who told me that if he did not believe in a future life, in heaven and hell, he would rape, murder, steal, and be a drunkard. That is what I call being a sham civilized being. On the other hand, not only could a Huxley, a John Stuart Mill, a David Hume, live great and fine lives without any religion, but a great many others of us, quite obscure persons, can at least live decent lives without it.

To be genuinely civilized means to be able to walk straight and to live honorably without the props and crutches of one or another of the childish dreams which have so far supported men. That such a life is likely to be ecstatically happy I will not claim. But that it can be lived in quiet content, accepting resignedly what cannot be helped, not expecting the impossible, and thankful for small mercies, this I would maintain. That it will be difficult for men in general to learn this lesson I do not deny. But that it will be impossible I will not admit since so many have learned it already.

Man has not yet grown up. He is not adult. Like a child he cries for the moon and lives in a world of fantasies. And the race as a whole has perhaps reached the great crisis of its life. Can it grow up as a race in the same sense as individual men grow up? Can man put away childish things and adolescent dreams? Can he grasp the real world as it actually is, stark and bleak, without its religious or romantic halo, and still retain his ideals, striving for great ends and noble achievements? If he can, all may yet be well. If he cannot, he will probably sink back into the savagery and brutality from which he came, taking a humble place once more among the lower animals.

The Mystic's Experience of God

RUFUS M. JONES

ACCORDING TO THOSE who have been there, the experience that we call mystical is charged with the conviction of real, direct contact and commerce with God. It is the almost universal testimony of those who are mystics that they find God through their experience. John Tauler says that in his best moments of "devout prayer and the uplifting of the mind to God," he experiences "the pure presence of God" in his own soul; but he adds that all he can tell others about the experience is "as poor and unlike it as the point of a needle is to the heavens above us."

There are many different degrees of intensity, concentration, and conviction in the experiences of different individual mystics, and also in the various experiences of the same individual from time to time. There has been a tendency in most studies of mysticism to regard the state of ecstasy as *par excellence* mystical experience. That is, however, a grave mistake. The calmer, more meditative, less emotional, less ecstatic experiences of God possess greater constructive value for life and character than do ecstatic experiences which presuppose a peculiar psychical frame and disposition. The seasoned Quaker, in the corporate hush and stillness of a silent

meeting, is far removed from ecstasy, but he is not the less convinced that he is meeting with God.

The more normal, expansive mystical experiences come apparently when the personal self is at its best. Its powers and capacities are raised to an unusual unity and fused together. The whole being, with its accumulated submerged life, *finds itself*. The process of preparing for any high achievement is a severe and laborious one; but nothing seems easier in the moment of success than is the accomplishment for which the life has been prepared. There comes to be formed within the person what Aristotle called "a dexterity of soul," so that the person does with ease what he has become skilled to do. A mystic of the fourteenth century stated the principle in these words: "It is my aim to be to the Eternal God what a man's hand is to a man."

There are many human experiences which carry a man up to levels where he has not usually been before, and where he finds himself possessed of insight and energies that he had hardly suspected were his until that moment. One leaps to his full height when the right inner spring is reached. We are quite familiar with the way in which instinctive tendencies in us, and emotions both egoistic and social, become organized under a group of ideas and ideals into a single system, which we call a sentiment, such as love, or patriotism, or devotion to truth. It forms slowly, and one hardly realizes that it has formed until some occasion unexpectedly brings it into full operation and we find ourselves able with perfect ease to overcome the most powerful inhibitory and opposing instincts and habits, which until then had usually controlled us. Literary and artistic geniuses supply us with many instances in which, in a sudden flash, the crude material at hand is shot through with vision, and the complicated plot of a drama, the full significance of a character, or the complete glory of a statue stands revealed, as if, to use R. L. Stevenson's illustration, a jinni had brought it on a golden tray as a gift from another world. Abraham Lincoln, striking off in a few intense minutes his Gettysburg address, as beautiful in style and perfect in form as anything in human literature, is as good an illustration as we need of the way in which a highly organized person, by a kindling flash, has at his hand all the moral and spiritual gains of a lifetime.

We come now to the central question of our consideration: Do mystical experiences settle anything? Are they purely subjective

and one-sided, or do they prove to have objective reference and so to be two-sided? Do they take the experiment across the chasm that separates "self" from "other"?

The most striking effect of such experience is not new fact-knowledge, not new items of empirical information, but new moral energy, heightened conviction, increased caloric quality, enlarged spiritual vision, an unusual radiant power of life. In short, the whole personality, in the case of the constructive mystics, appears to be raised to a new level of life and to have gained from somewhere many calories of life-feeding, spiritual substance. We are quite familiar with the way in which adrenalin suddenly flushes into the physical system and adds a new and incalculable power to brain and muscle. Under its stimulus a man can carry out a piano when the house is on fire. May not, perhaps, some energy, from some Source with which our spirits are allied, flush our inner being with forces and powers by which we can be fortified to stand the universe and more than stand it?

I believe that mystical experiences do, in the long run, expand our knowledge of God, and do succeed in verifying themselves. Mysticism is a sort of spiritual protoplasm, which underlies, as a basic substance, much that is best in religion, in ethics, and in life itself. It has generally been the mystic, the prophet, the seer, who have spotted out new ways forward in the jungle of our world or lifted our race to new spiritual levels. Their experiences have in some way equipped them for unusual tasks, have given supplies of energy to them which their neighbors did not have, and have apparently brought them into vital correspondence with dimensions and regions of reality that others miss. The proof that they have found God, or at least a domain of spiritual reality, is to be seen rather in the moral and spiritual fruits which test out and verify the experience.

Consciousness of beauty or of truth or of goodness baffles analysis as much as consciousness of God does. These values have no objective standing ground in current psychology. They are not things in the world of space. They submit to no adequate causal explanation. They have their ground of being in some other kind of world than that of the mechanical order, a world composed of quantitative masses of matter in motion. These experiences of value, which are as real for experience as stone walls are, make very clear the fact that there are depths and capacities in the nature

of the normal human mind which we do not usually recognize, and of which we have scant and imperfect accounts in our textbooks. Our minds taken in their full range, in other words, have some sort of contact and relationship with an eternal nature of things far deeper than atoms and molecules.

Only very slowly and gradually has the race learned, through finite symbols and temporal forms, to interpret beauty and truth and goodness, which, in their essence, are as ineffable and indescribable as is the mystic's experience of God. Plato often speaks as if he had high moments of experience when he rose to the naked vision of beauty—beauty “alone, separate, and eternal,” as he says. But, as a matter of fact, however exalted heavenly and enduring beauty may be in its essence, we know *what it is* only as it appears in fair forms of objects, of body, of soul, of actions; in harmonious blending of sounds or colors; in well-ordered or happily combined groupings of many aspects in one unity, which is as it ought to be. Truth and moral goodness always transcend our attainments, and we sometimes feel that the very end and goal of life is the pursuit of that truth or that goodness which eye hath not seen nor ear heard. But whatever truth we do attain, or whatever goodness we do achieve, is always concrete. Truth is just this one more added fact that resists all attempt to doubt it. Goodness is just this simple everyday deed that reveals a heroic spirit and a brave venture of faith in the midst of difficulties.

So, too, the mystic knowledge of God is not some esoteric communication, supplied through trance or ecstasy; it is an intuitive personal touch with God, felt to be the essentially real, the bursting forth of an intense love for Him, which heightens all the capacities and activities of life, followed by the slow laboratory effects which verify it. “All I could never be” now *is*. It seems possible to stand the universe—even to do something toward the transformation of it. And if the experience does not prove that the soul has found God, it at least does this: it makes the soul feel that proofs of God are wholly unnecessary.

Plato and Bacon

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

... THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN the philosophy of Bacon and that of his predecessors cannot, we think, be better illustrated than by comparing his views on some important subjects with those of Plato. We select Plato, because we conceive that he did more than any other person towards giving to the minds of speculative men that bent which they retained till they received from Bacon a new impulse in a diametrically opposite direction.

It is curious to observe how differently these great men estimated the value of every kind of knowledge. Take Arithmetic for example. Plato, after speaking slightly of the convenience of being able to reckon and compute in the ordinary transactions of life, passes to what he considers as a far more important advantage. The study of the properties of numbers, he tells us, habituates the mind to the contemplation of pure truth, and raises it above the material universe. He would have his disciples apply themselves to this study,—not that they may be able to buy or sell,—not that they may qualify themselves to be shopkeepers or travelling merchants,—but that they may learn to withdraw their minds from the ever-shifting spectacle of this visible and tangible world, and to fix them on the immutable essence of things.

Bacon on the other hand, valued this branch of knowledge only on account of its uses with reference to that visible and tangible world which Plato so much despised. He speaks with scorn of the mystical arithmetic of the later Platonists; and laments the propensity of mankind to employ, on mere matters of curiosity, powers, the whole exertion of which is required for purposes of solid advantage. He advises arithmeticians to leave these trifles, and to employ themselves in framing convenient expressions, which may be of use in physical researches.

The same reasons which led Plato to recommend the study of arithmetic, led him to recommend also the study of mathematics.

The vulgar crowd of geometers, he says, will not understand him. They have practice always in view. They do not know that the real use of the science is to lead man to the knowledge of abstract, essential, eternal truth. Indeed, if we are to believe Plutarch, Plato carried this feeling so far, that he considered geometry as degraded by being applied to any purpose of vulgar utility. Archytas, it seems, had framed machines of extraordinary power, on mathematical principles. Plato remonstrated with his friend; and declared that this was to degrade a noble intellectual exercise into a low craft, fit only for carpenters and wheelwrights. The office of geometry, he said, was to discipline the mind, not to minister to the base wants of the body. His interference was successful; and from that time, according to Plutarch, the science of mechanics was considered as unworthy of the attention of a philosopher.

Archimedes in a later age imitated and surpassed Archytas. But even Archimedes was not free from the prevailing notion that geometry was degraded by being employed to produce any thing useful. It was with difficulty that he was induced to stoop from speculation to practice. He was half ashamed of those inventions which were the wonder of hostile nations; and always spoke of them slightly as mere amusements—as trifles in which a mathematician might be suffered to relax his mind after intense application to the higher parts of his science.

The opinion of Bacon on this subject was diametrically opposed to that of the ancient philosophers. He valued geometry chiefly, if not solely, on account of those uses which to Plato appeared so base. And it is remarkable that the longer he lived the stronger this feeling became. When, in 1605, he wrote the two books on the ‘Advancement of Learning,’ he dwelt on the advantages which mankind derived from mixed mathematics; but he at the same time admitted, that the beneficial effect produced by mathematical study on the intellect, though a collateral advantage, was ‘no less worthy than that which was principal and intended.’ But it is evident that his views underwent a change. When, nearly twenty years later, he published the *De Augmentis*, which is the treatise on the ‘Advancement of Learning,’ greatly expanded and carefully corrected, he made important alterations in the part which related to mathematics. He condemned with severity the high pretensions of the mathematicians,—‘delicias et fastum mathematicorum.’ Assuming the well-being of the human race to be the end of knowledge, he

pronounced that mathematical science could claim no higher rank than that of an appendage, or an auxiliary to other sciences. Mathematical science, he says, is the handmaid of natural philosophy—she ought to demean herself as such—and he declares that he cannot conceive by what ill chance it has happened that she presumes to claim precedence over her mistress. He predicts,—a prediction which would have made Plato shudder,—that as more and more discoveries are made in physics, there will be more and more branches of mixed mathematics. Of that collateral advantage, the value of which, twenty years before, he rated so highly, he says not one word. This omission cannot have been the effect of mere inadvertence. His own treatise was before him. From that treatise he deliberately expunged whatever was favorable to the study of pure mathematics, and inserted several keen reflections on the ardent votaries of that study. This fact in our opinion, admits of only one explanation. Bacon's love of those pursuits which directly tend to improve the condition of mankind, and his jealousy of all pursuits merely curious, had grown upon him, and had, it may be, become immoderate. He was afraid of using any expression which might have the effect of inducing any man of talents to employ in speculations, useful only to the mind of the speculator, a single hour which might be employed in extending the empire of man over matter. If Bacon erred here, we must acknowledge that we greatly prefer his error to the opposite error of Plato.—We have no patience with a philosophy which, like those Roman matrons who swallowed abortives in order to preserve their shapes, takes pains to be barren for fear of being homely.

Let us pass to astronomy. This was one of the sciences which Plato exhorted his disciples to learn, but for reasons far removed from common habits of thinking. 'Shall we set down astronomy,' says Socrates, 'among the subjects of study?' 'I think so,' answers his young friend Glaucon: 'to know something about the seasons, about the months and the years is of use for military purposes, as well as for agriculture and navigation.' 'It amuses me,' says Socrates, 'to see how afraid you are lest the common herd of people should accuse you of recommending useless studies.' He then proceeds in that pure and magnificent diction, which, as Cicero said Jupiter would use if Jupiter spoke Greek, to explain, that the use of astronomy is not to add to the vulgar comforts of life, but to assist in raising the mind to the contemplation of things which are

to be perceived by the pure intellect alone. The knowledge of the actual motions of the heavenly bodies he considers as of little value. The appearances which make the sky beautiful at night are, he tells us, like the figures which a geometrician draws on the sand, mere examples, mere helps to feeble minds. We must get beyond them; we must neglect them; we must attain to an astronomy which is as independent of the actual stars as geometrical truth is independent of the lines of an ill-drawn diagram. This is, we imagine, very nearly, if not exactly, the astronomy which Bacon compared to the ox of Prometheus—a sleek, well shaped hide, stuffed with rubbish, goodly to look at, but containing nothing to eat. He complained that astronomy had, to its great injury, been separated from natural philosophy, of which it was one of the noblest provinces, and annexed to the domain of mathematics. The world stood in need, he said, of a very different astronomy—of a *living astronomy*, of an astronomy which should set forth the nature, the motion, and the influences of the heavenly bodies, as they really are.

On the greatest and most useful of all inventions,—the invention of alphabetical writing,—Plato did not look with much complacency. He seems to have thought that the use of letters had operated on the human mind as the use of the go-cart in learning to walk, or of corks in learning to swim, is said to operate on the human body. It was a support which soon became indispensable to those who used it,—which made vigorous exertion first unnecessary, and then impossible. The powers of the intellect would, he conceived, have been more fully developed without this delusive aid. Men would have been compelled to exercise the understanding and the memory; and, by deep and assiduous meditation, to make truth thoroughly their own. Now, on the contrary, much knowledge is traced on paper, but little is engraved in the soul. A man is certain that he can find information at a moment's notice when he wants it. He therefore suffers it to fade from his mind. Such a man cannot in strictness be said to know any thing. He has the show without the reality of wisdom. These opinions Plato has put into the mouth of an ancient King of Egypt. But it is evident from the context that they were his own; and so they were understood to be by Quintilian. Indeed they are in perfect accordance with the whole Platonic system.

Bacon's views, as may easily be supposed, were widely different. The powers of the memory, he observes, without the help of writ-

ing, can do little towards the advancement of any useful science. He acknowledges that the memory may be disciplined to such a point as to be able to perform very extraordinary feats. But on such feats he sets little value. The habits of his mind, he tells us, are such that he is not disposed to rate highly any accomplishment, however rare, which is of no practical use to mankind. As to these prodigious achievements of the memory, he ranks them with the exhibitions of rope-dancers and tumblers. 'The two performances,' he says, 'are of much the same sort. The one is an abuse of the powers of the body; the other is an abuse of the powers of the mind. Both may perhaps excite our wonder; but neither is entitled to our respect.'

To Plato, the science of medicine appeared one of very disputable advantage. He did not indeed object to quick cures for acute disorders, or for injuries produced by accidents. But the art which resists the slow sap of a chronic disease—which repairs frames enervated by lust, swollen by gluttony, or inflamed by wine—which encourages sensuality, by mitigating the natural punishment of the sensualist, and prolongs existence when the intellect has ceased to retain its entire energy—had no share of his esteem. A life protracted by medical skill he pronounced to be a long death. The exercise of the art of medicine ought, he said, to be tolerated so far as that art may serve to cure the occasional distempers of men whose constitutions are good. As to those who have bad constitutions, let them die;—and the sooner the better. Such men are unfit for war, for magistracy, for the management of their domestic affairs. That however is comparatively of little consequence. But they are incapable of study and speculation. If they engage in any severe mental exercise, they are troubled with giddiness and fullness of the head; all which they lay to the account of philosophy. The best thing that can happen to such wretches is to have done with life at once. He quotes mythical authority in support of this doctrine; and reminds his disciples that the practice of the sons of Æsculapius, as described by Homer, extended only to the cure of external injuries.

Far different was the philosophy of Bacon. Of all the sciences, that which he seems to have regarded with the greatest interest was the science which, in Plato's opinion, would not be tolerated in a well regulated community. To make men perfect was no part of Bacon's plan. His humble aim was to make imperfect men comfort-

able. The beneficence of his philosophy resembled the beneficence of the common Father, whose sun rises on the evil and the good—whose rain descends for the just and the unjust. In Plato's opinion man was made for philosophy; in Bacon's opinion philosophy was made for man; it was a means to an end;—and that end was to increase the pleasures, and to mitigate the pains of millions who are not and cannot be philosophers. That a valetudinarian who took great pleasure in being wheeled along his terrace, who relished his boiled chicken and his weak wine and water, and who enjoyed a hearty laugh over the Queen of Navarre's tales, should be treated as a *caput lupinum* because he could not read the *Timæus* without a headache, was a notion which the humane spirit of the English school of wisdom altogether rejected. Bacon would not have thought it beneath the dignity of a philosopher to contrive an improved garden chair for such a valetudinarian,—to devise some way of rendering his medicines more palatable,—to invent repasts which he might enjoy, and pillows on which he might sleep soundly; and this though there might not be the smallest hope that the mind of the poor invalid would ever rise to the contemplation of the ideal beautiful and the ideal good. As Plato had cited the religious legends of Greece to justify his contempt for the more recondite parts of the art of healing, Bacon vindicated the dignity of that art by appealing to the example of Christ; and reminded his readers that the great physician of the soul did not disdain to be also the physician of the body.

When we pass from the science of medicine to that of legislation, we find the same difference between the systems of these two great men. Plato, at the commencement of the fine Dialogue on Laws, lays it down as a fundamental principle, that the end of legislation is to make men virtuous. It is unnecessary to point out the extravagant conclusions to which such a proposition leads. Bacon well knew to how great an extent the happiness of every society must depend on the virtue of its members; and he also knew what legislators can, and what they cannot do for the purpose of promoting virtue. The view which he has given of the end of legislation and of the principal means for the attainment of that end, has always seemed to us eminently happy; even among the many happy passages of the same kind with which his works abound. . . . The end is the well-being of the people. The means are the imparting of moral and religious education; the providing of every

thing necessary for defence against foreign enemies; the maintaining of internal order; the establishing of a judicial, financial, and commercial system, under which wealth may be rapidly accumulated and securely enjoyed.

Even with respect to the form in which laws ought to be drawn, there is a remarkable difference of opinion between the Greek and the Englishman. Plato thought a preamble essential; Bacon thought it mischievous. Each was consistent with himself. Plato, considering the moral improvement of the people as the end of legislation, justly inferred that a law which commanded and threatened, but which neither convinced the reason nor touched the heart, must be a most imperfect law. He was not content with deterring from theft a man who still continued to be a thief at heart,—with restraining a son who hated his mother from beating his mother. The only obedience on which he set so much value, was the obedience which an enlightened understanding yields to reason, and which a virtuous disposition yields to precepts of virtue. He really seems to have believed that, by prefixing to every law an eloquent and pathetic exhortation, he should, to a great extent, render penal enactments superfluous. Bacon entertained no such romantic hopes; and he well knew the practical inconveniences of the course which Plato recommended. . . .

Had Plato lived to finish the 'Critias,' a comparison between that noble fiction and the 'New Atlantis,' would probably have furnished us with still more striking instances. It is amusing to think with what horror he would have seen such an institution as 'Solomon's House' rising in his republic; with what vehemence he would have ordered the brewhouses, the perfume-houses, and the dispensatories to be pulled down; and with what inexorable rigor he would have driven beyond the frontier all the Fellows of the College, Merchants of [L]ight and Depredators, Lamps and Pioneers.

To sum up the whole: we should say that the aim of the Platonic philosophy was to exalt man into a god. The aim of the Baconian philosophy was to provide man with what he requires while he continues to be man. The aim of the Platonic philosophy was to raise us far above vulgar wants. The aim of the Baconian philosophy was to supply our vulgar wants. The former aim was noble; but the latter was attainable. Plato drew a good bow; but, like Acestes in Virgil, he aimed at the stars; and therefore, though there was no want of strength or skill, the shot was thrown away. His

arrow was indeed followed by a track of dazzling radiance, but it struck nothing. . . . Bacon fixed his eye on a mark which was placed on the earth and within bow-shot, and hit it in the white. The philosophy of Plato began in words and ended in words,—noble words indeed,—words such as were to be expected from the finest of human intellects exercising boundless dominion over the finest of human languages. The philosophy of Bacon began in observations and ended in arts.

The boast of the ancient philosophers was, that their doctrine formed the minds of men to a high degree of wisdom and virtue. This was indeed the only practical good which the most celebrated of those teachers even pretended to effect; and undoubtedly if they had effected this, they would have deserved the greatest praise. But the truth is, that in those very matters in which alone they professed to do any good to mankind, in those very matters for the sake of which they neglected all the vulgar interests of mankind, they did nothing, or worse than nothing. They promised what was impracticable; they despised what was practicable; they filled the world with long words and long beards; and they left it as wicked and as ignorant as they found it. . . .

SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING

1. Write an essay on the thesis "Human happiness nourishes itself on a whole host of minor illusions." Pick out four or five of our minor (or major) obsessions, such as dreams of clothes, cars, water skiing, love, fraternities, family life, money. The problem is to arrange your items in an order of ascending interest—humorous or serious. Give each item no less than a paragraph.
2. Attack or defend Stace's assertion about "the real world as it actually is, stark and bleak."
3. Write an essay on the thesis "Contrary to popular belief, ideals are not off in the clouds: we know *what they are* only as they appear in the fair forms of objects, of body, of soul, of actions."
4. Write an essay in which you contrast Stace with Jones, working from a thesis that supports one against the other. Conduct your comparison as Macaulay does with Plato and Bacon; treat both men under each of your points.
5. Write a passage of straight imitation or parody of Macaulay,

taking as your opposites two baseball players, two movie actresses, or perhaps two types of person, like the freshman and the sophomore: "To sum up the whole: we should say that the aim of the freshman is to learn everything. The aim of the sophomore is to appear as if he had already learned it."

6. Write an essay in which you clearly favor one side, but in which you contrast your side with its opposite fully and fairly—for instance, baseball as better than football, one team over another, big college over small, or the ideal over the practical (using Macaulay against himself). Again, treat both sides under each of your points, as Macaulay does.

4 / Paragraphs:

Beginnings, Ends, & the Whole Essay

from *Aggression in Psychiatric Patients*

ROBERT W. MOULTON and ELTON B. MC NEIL

from *Preface to the English Dictionary*

SAMUEL JOHNSON

from *Politics and the English Language*

GEORGE ORWELL

from *The Test of Academic Freedom*

PETER A. CARMICHAEL

from *Modern Democracy: The Reality*

CARL BECKER

Cervantes • GEORGE SANTAYANA

THE FIRST FIVE EXAMPLES are excerpts. They are only the beginnings and ends of essays, with the middles omitted entirely. They show different writers facing the problems of getting started and

of concluding, and they suggest how important it is to set the thesis clearly at the beginning and to round it off at the end, usually in a single paragraph for the beginning and another for the conclusion. The beginnings, as if shaped like a funnel, start somewhat broadly, then narrow, in varying degrees of concision, to an assertion of thesis. Johnson sifts his thesis through three paragraphs; Orwell, through three sentences. Notice how the endings seem to turn the funnel upside down. Each ending begins with a fresh restatement of thesis, then broadens out briefly to take in wider implications and deeper meanings.

Santayana's essay on the world's classic portrayal of the clash between ideality and reality reaches a norm of virtuous paragraphing well worth study for that aspect alone. Notice how his beginning paragraph narrows to a comprehensive yet lucid thesis, and how his ending leaves his idea widened and strengthened. Notice how, as if with a norm in his head, he measures his thoughts into equal paragraphs, occasionally coming short for emphasis, occasionally expanding for clarity. Notice, too, how almost every paragraph begins with its topic sentence, its own thesis in small.

from *The Relationship of the Socialization Process to the Handling of Aggression in Psychiatric Patients*

ROBERT W. MOULTON *and*

ELTON B. MCNEIL

THE PRESENT STUDY is, in part, an outgrowth of previous research on the origins of defense mechanisms in normal pre-adolescents. The bond of theory between the investigation of normal children and our current work on certain adult psychiatric patients involves two basic assumptions. First, we assume that tendencies to handle conflict by one type of defense and symptom, rather than by others,

are learned. If this is true, then by determining the learning conditions under which given mechanisms come to be "preferred" we can successfully predict differences among normal individuals in their characteristic ways of handling unacceptable needs. Second, we assume that the symptoms a person develops under excessive stress are merely exaggerations of the behavior resulting from defensive tendencies learned in childhood and used by that individual in less marked form prior to his illness. To take a simple example, we believe that we can predict, from such factors as the ways a child is disciplined, the extent to which he will defend against hostile feelings by turning the aggression against himself rather than expressing it directly toward others. We expect, further, that it is persons who have learned to turn anger inward who are likely, in situations of intense conflict, to develop symptoms of depression rather than, let us say, schizophrenia.



THE PRINCIPAL EXPLORATION we have made of the data thus far has concerned our test of the level of aspiration of our subjects. In this test the subject attempts to do a difficult task in which he is unable to judge the adequacy of his performance. He is informed that calculations are being made by the examiner to assess his efforts and then is told what score he has achieved. These scores are actually predetermined and presented to the subject in a fixed pattern. After the presentation of each score for his last performance, the subject is asked to estimate how well he thinks he will do on the next trial. The effect of this feedback of false information to the subject is reflected in the changes which appear in his estimates of future accomplishment. An average of the shifts in his aspiration forms an index of the level of aspiration. The series of artificial scores with which he is presented contains a special provision. The first half of the scores conveys the impression of increasing success and achievement in the task, whereas the second half of the scores represents increasing failure to attain. In this manner it is possible to observe the effect, on level of aspiration, of success followed by failure. We discovered that our Ins consistently raised their level of aspiration when faced with failure, but the Outs failed to display such a discrepancy ($P < 0.06$). The theoretical explanation which we feel best fits this phenomenon involves accepting the premise

that those persons who turn aggression on themselves are most liable to feel that failure is a consequence of some personal inability or lack of effort and to put forth increased energy as a response. Having only themselves to blame, as a characteristic pattern of their behavior, they should seek a remedy for failure within themselves. If our conception of the Outs is correct we would expect them to experience something of a feeling of the inevitability of failure, since it occurs, as they see it, because of circumstances beyond their control.

from *Preface to the English Dictionary*

SAMUEL JOHNSON

IT IS THE FATE of those, who toil at the lower employments of life, to be rather driven by the fear of evil, than attracted by the prospect of good; to be exposed to censure, without hope of praise; to be disgraced by miscarriage, or punished for neglect, where success would have been without applause, and diligence without reward.

Among these unhappy mortals is the writer of dictionaries; whom mankind have considered, not as the pupil, but the slave of science, the pioneer of literature, doomed only to remove rubbish and clear obstructions from the paths, through which Learning and Genius press forward to conquest and glory, without bestowing a smile on the humble drudge that facilitates their progress. Every other author may aspire to praise; the lexicographer can only hope to escape reproach, and even this negative recompense has been yet granted to very few.

I have, notwithstanding this discouragement, attempted a Dictionary of the English language, which, while it was employed in the cultivation of every species of literature, has itself been hitherto neglected; suffered to spread, under the direction of chance, into wild exuberance; resigned to the tyranny of time and fashion; and exposed to the corruptions of ignorance, and caprices of innovation.



IN THIS WORK, when it shall be found that much is omitted, let it not be forgotten that much likewise is performed; and though no book was ever spared out of tenderness to the author, and the world is little solicitous to know whence proceeded the faults of that which it condemns; yet it may gratify curiosity to inform it, that the English Dictionary was written with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academick bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow. It may repress the triumph of malignant criticism to observe, that if our language is not here fully displayed, I have only failed in an attempt, which no human powers have hitherto completed. If the lexicons of ancient tongues, now immutably fixed, and comprised in a few volumes, be yet, after the toil of successive ages, inadequate and delusive; if the aggregated knowledge, and co-operating diligence of the Italian academicians, did not secure them from the censure of Beni; if the embodied criticks of France, when fifty years had been spent upon their work, were obliged to change its economy, and give their second edition another form, I may surely be contented without the praise of perfection, which, if I could obtain, in this gloom of solitude, what would it avail me? I have protracted my work till most of those, whom I wish to please have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds. I therefore dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise.

from *Politics and the English Language*

GEORGE ORWELL

MOST PEOPLE WHO BOTHER with the matter at all would admit that the English language is in a bad way, but it is generally assumed that we cannot by conscious action do anything about it. Our civilization is decadent, and our language—so the argument runs—must inevitably share in the general collapse. It follows that any struggle against the abuse of language is a sentimental archaism,

like preferring candles to electric light or hansom cabs to aeroplanes. Underneath this lies the half-conscious belief that language is a natural growth and not an instrument which we shape for our own purposes.

Now, it is clear that the decline of a language must ultimately have political and economic causes: it is not due simply to the bad influence of this or that individual writer. . . .



I HAVE NOT HERE BEEN considering the literary use of language, but merely language as an instrument for expressing and not for concealing or preventing thought. Stuart Chase and others have come near to claiming that all abstract words are meaningless, and have used this as a pretext for advocating a kind of political quietism. Since you don't know what Fascism is, how can you struggle against Fascism? One need not swallow such absurdities as this, but one ought to recognize that the present political chaos is connected with the decay of language, and that one can probably bring about some improvement by starting at the verbal end. If you simplify your English, you are freed from the worst follies of orthodoxy. You cannot speak any of the necessary dialects, and when you make a stupid remark its stupidity will be obvious, even to yourself. Political language—and with variations this is true of all political parties, from Conservatives to Anarchists—is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind. One cannot change this all in a moment, but one can at least change one's own habits, and from time to time one can even, if one jeers loudly enough, send some worn-out and useless phrase—some *jackboot*, *Achilles' heel*, *hotbed*, *melting pot*, *acid test*, *veritable inferno* or other lump of verbal refuse—into the dustbin where it belongs.

from *The Test of Academic Freedom*

PETER A. CARMICHAEL

THOSE WHO HAVE the greatest need of freedom of thought and utterance are thinkers, investigators, and teachers. As the academic profession more than any other comprises these classes, we should expect the profession to be the principal repository, as well as defender, of freedom. While it is true that, at intervals during the twenty-four hundred years since Socrates, great men of the academic calling have conspicuously stood with those of other callings in the defense of intellectual freedom, it is also true that many have been faint-hearted or indifferent, and many too have been found who were the enemies of freedom. The history of the American Association of University Professors testifies abundantly to the indifference, shyness, and suspicion, with regard to intellectual freedom, of a very large section of the professoriate. Allowing that an occupation in which teaching, discovery, and writing are the ends is certain to be very individualistic and perhaps never unanimous in any opinion; and not forgetting that academic life catches a great many whose gifts do not destine them to be independent in thought or action but shy and submissive for their living's sake, we still cannot doubt the clear, indefeasible principle that the profession of learning presupposes and necessitates freedom to conduct inquiry and to communicate the results.



THE TRANSACTIONS OF TEACHING and learning are always in terms of ideas. Interests, which are supposed by some, including heresy hunters, to be the determiners of ideas, are, in fact, subject to ideal testing. Truth itself is indeterminate except in ideal terms. A very old and powerful tradition in the history of thought maintains with great acuteness and authority that reality, as against bare appearance, is idea; and that the means to its apprehension is also ideal.

It cannot be expected that uneducated minds should pay attention to such considerations. However, it can be expected that responsible educators and institutions should do so. The measure of them is the extent to which they fulfill this expectation, by fostering and propagating thought. This is also the measure of the extent to which they allow and make use of academic freedom. Without freedom they can only expect ignorance and abasement, and the cancellation of their reason for existing.

from *Modern Democracy: The Reality*

CARL BECKER

IN THE PRECEDING LECTURE we were concerned with the ideal form of democracy. It is obvious that the reality does not strictly conform to this ideal. There is nothing remarkable in that. The ideal is always better than the real—otherwise there would be no need for ideals. We have been told, as if it were a surprising thing, that in Russia the Revolution has been betrayed. But it was bound to be betrayed. It is in the nature of revolutions to be betrayed, since life and history have an inveterate habit of betraying the ideal aspirations of men. In this sense the liberal-democratic revolution was likewise bound to be betrayed—men were sure to be neither so rational nor so well-intentioned as the ideology conceived them to be. But while a little betrayal is a normal thing, too much is something that calls for explanation. The liberal-democratic revolution has been so far betrayed, the ideal so imperfectly portrayed in the course of events, that its characteristic features cannot easily be recognized in any democratic society today. In this lecture I shall attempt to disclose some of the essential reasons for the profound discord between democracy as it was ideally projected and democracy as a going concern.

* * *

IF THEN THE DEMOCRATIC WAY of life is to survive we must distinguish the kinds of individual freedom that are essential to it

from those that are unessential or disastrous. Broadly speaking, the kinds that are essential are those which the individual enjoys in his intellectual and political activities; the kinds that are unessential are the relatively unrestrained liberties he has hitherto enjoyed in his economic activities. The distinction is comparatively easy to make in theory, but will be extremely difficult to effect in practice. Not the least of the difficulties arises from the fact that in the traditional ideology the freedom of the individual in the political, the intellectual, and the economic realms are so intimately associated that they seem to stand or fall together. The result is that any proposal to regulate by governmental authority the system of free economic enterprise is sure to be opposed on the ground that if the system of free economic enterprise cannot be maintained the other freedoms of democracy, freedom of thought and political freedom, must in the end be abandoned also. Whether this is true can only be determined by the event. Whatever the event may be, the difficult but essential task which confronts all democratic societies today may be formulated as follows: how in practice to curtail the freedom of the individual in economic enterprise sufficiently to effect that equality of opportunity and of possessions without which democracy is an empty form, and at the same time to preserve that measure of individual freedom in intellectual and political life without which it cannot exist.

Cervantes

GEORGE SANTAYANA

CERVANTES IS KNOWN to the world as the author of *Don Quixote*, and although his other works are numerous and creditable, and his pathetic life is carefully recorded, yet it is as the author of *Don Quixote* alone that he deserves to be generally known or considered. Had his wit not come by chance on the idea of the Ingenious Hidalgo, Cervantes would never have attained his universal renown, even if his other works and the interest of his career should have sufficed to give him a place in the literary history of his

country. Here, then, where our task is to present in miniature only what has the greatest and most universal value, we may treat our author as playwrights are advised to treat their heroes, saying of him only what is necessary to the understanding of the single action with which we are concerned. This single action is the writing of *Don Quixote*; and what we shall try to understand is what there was in the life and environment of Cervantes that enabled him to compose that great book, and that remained imbedded in its characters, its episodes, and its moral.

There was in vogue in the Spain of the sixteenth century a species of romance called books of chivalry. They were developments of the legends dealing with King Arthur and the Knights of the Table Round, and their numerous descendants and emulators. These stories had appealed in the first place to what we should still think of as the spirit of chivalry: they were full of tourneys and single combats, desperate adventures and romantic loves. The setting was in the same vague and wonderful region as the Coast of Bohemia, where to the known mountains, seas, and cities that have poetic names, was added a prodigious number of caverns, castles, islands, and forests of the romancer's invention. With time and popularity this kind of story had naturally intensified its characteristics until it had reached the greatest extravagance and absurdity, and combined in a way the unreality of the fairy tale with the bombast of the melodrama.

Cervantes had apparently read these books with avidity, and was not without a great sympathy with the kind of imagination they embodied. His own last and most carefully written book, the *Travails of Persiles and Sigismunda*, is in many respects an imitation of them; it abounds in savage islands, furious tyrants, prodigious feats of arms, disguised maidens whose discretion is as marvelous as their beauty, and happy deliverances from intricate and hopeless situations. His first book also, the *Galatea*, was an embodiment of a kind of pastoral idealism: sentimental verses being interspersed with euphuistic prose, the whole describing the lovelorn shepherds and heartless shepherdesses of Arcadia.

But while these books, which were the author's favorites among his own works, expressed perhaps Cervantes's natural taste and ambition, the events of his life and the real bent of his talent, which in time he came himself to recognize, drove him to a very different sort of composition. His family was ancient but impoverished, and

he was forced throughout his life to turn his hand to anything that could promise him a livelihood. His existence was a continuous series of experiments, vexations, and disappointments. He adopted at first the profession of arms, and followed his colors as a private soldier upon several foreign expeditions. He was long quartered in Italy; he fought at Lepanto against the Turks, where among other wounds he received one that maimed his left hand, to the greater glory, as he tells us, of his right; he was captured by Barbary pirates and remained for five years a slave in Algiers; he was ransomed, and returned to Spain only to find official favors and recognitions denied him; and finally, at the age of thirty-seven, he abandoned the army for literature.

His first thought as a writer does not seem to have been to make direct use of his rich experience and varied observation; he was rather possessed by an obstinate longing for that poetic gift which, as he confesses in one place, Heaven had denied him. He began with the idyllic romance, the *Galatea*, already mentioned, and at various times during the rest of his life wrote poems, plays, and stories of a romantic and sentimental type. In the course of these labors, however, he struck one vein of much richer promise. It was what the Spanish call the *picaresque*; that is, the description of the life and character of rogues, pickpockets, vagabonds, and all those wretches and sorry wits that might be found about the highways, in the country inns, or in the slums of cities. Of this kind is much of what is best in his collected stories, the *Novelas Ejemplares*. The talent and the experience which he betrays in these amusing narratives were to be invaluable to him later as the author of *Don Quixote*, where they enabled him to supply a foil to the fine world of his poor hero's imagination.

We have now mentioned what were perhaps the chief elements of the preparation of Cervantes for his great task. They were a great familiarity with the romances of chivalry, and a natural liking for them; a life of honorable but unrewarded endeavor both in war and in the higher literature; and much experience of Vagabondia, with the art of taking down and reproducing in amusing profusion the typical scenes and languages of low life. Out of these elements a single spark, which we may attribute to genius, to chance, or to inspiration, was enough to produce a new and happy conception: that of a parody on the romances of chivalry, in which the extravagances of the fables of knighthood should be contrasted with the

sordid realities of life. This is done by the ingenious device of representing a country gentleman whose naturally generous mind, unhinged by much reading of the books of chivalry, should lead him to undertake the office of knight-errant, and induce him to ride about the country clad in ancient armor, to right wrongs, to succor defenseless maidens, to kill giants, and to win empires at least as vast as that of Alexander.

This is the subject of *Don Quixote*. But happy as the conception is, it could not have produced a book of enduring charm and well-seasoned wisdom, had it not been filled in with a great number of amusing and lifelike episodes, and verified by two admirable figures, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, characters at once intimately individual and truly universal.

Don Quixote at first appears to the reader, and probably appeared to the author as well, as primarily a madman,—a thin and gaunt old village squire, whose brain has been turned by the nonsense he has read and taken for gospel truth; and who is punished for his ridiculous mania by an uninterrupted series of beatings, falls, indignities, and insults. But the hero and the author together, with the ingenuity proper to madness and the inevitableness proper to genius, soon begin to disclose the fund of intelligence and ideal passion which underlies this superficial insanity. We see that Don Quixote is only mad north-north-west, when the wind blows from the quarter of his chivalrous preoccupation. At other times he shows himself a man of great goodness and fineness of wit; virtuous, courageous, courteous, and generous, and in fact the perfect ideal of a gentleman. When he takes, for instance, a handful of acorns from the goat-herds' table and begins a grandiloquent discourse upon the Golden Age, we feel how cultivated the man is, how easily the little things of life suggest to him the great things, and with what delight he dwells on what is beautiful and happy. The truth and pathos of the character become all the more compelling when we consider how naturally the hero's madness and calamities flow from this same exquisite sense of what is good.

The contrast to this figure is furnished by that of Sancho Panza, who embodies all that is matter-of-fact, gross, and plebeian. Yet he is willing to become Don Quixote's esquire, and by his credulity and devotion shows what an ascendancy a heroic and enthusiastic nature can gain over the most sluggish of men. Sancho has none of the instincts of his master. He never read the books of chivalry or

desired to right the wrongs of the world. He is naturally satisfied with his crust and his onions, if they can be washed down with enough bad wine. His good drudge of a wife never transformed herself in his fancy into a peerless Dulcinea. Yet Sancho follows his master into every danger, shares his discomfiture and the many blows that rain down upon him, and hopes to the end for the governorship of that Insula with which Don Quixote is some day to reward his faithful esquire.

As the madness of Don Quixote is humanized by his natural intelligence and courage, so the grossness and credulity of Sancho are relieved by his homely wit. He abounds in proverbs. He never fails to see the reality of a situation, and to protest doggedly against his master's visionary flights. He holds fast as long as he can to the evidence of his senses, and to his little weaknesses of flesh and spirit. But finally he surrenders to the authority of Don Quixote, and of the historians of chivalry, although not without a certain reluctance and some surviving doubts.

The character of Sancho is admirable for the veracity with which its details are drawn. The traits of the boor, the glutton, and the coward come most naturally to the surface upon occasion, yet Sancho remains a patient, good-natured peasant, a devoted servant, and a humble Christian. Under the cover of such lifelike incongruities, and of a pervasive humor, the author has given us a satirical picture of human nature not inferior, perhaps, to that furnished by Don Quixote himself. For instance: Don Quixote, after mending his helmet, tries its strength with a blow that smashes it to pieces. He mends it a second time, but now, without trial, deposes it to be henceforth a strong and perfect helmet. Sancho, when he is sent to bear a letter to Dulcinea, neglects to deliver it, and invents an account of his interview with the imaginary lady for the satisfaction of his master. But before long, by dint of repeating the story, he comes himself to believe his own lies. Thus self-deception in the knight is the ridiculous effect of courage, and in the esquire the not less ridiculous effect of sloth.

The adventures these two heroes encounter are naturally only such as travelers along the Spanish roads would then have been likely to come upon. The point of the story depends on the familiarity and commonness of the situations in which Don Quixote finds himself, so that the absurdity of his pretensions may be overwhelmingly shown. Critics are agreed in blaming the exceptions which

Cervantes allowed himself to make to the realism of his scenes, where he introduced romantic tales into the narrative of the first part. The tales are in themselves unworthy of their setting, and contrary to the spirit of the whole book. Cervantes doubtless yielded here partly to his story-telling habits, partly to a fear of monotony in the uninterrupted description of Don Quixote's adventures. He avoided this mistake in the second part, and devised the visit to the Duke's palace, and the intentional sport there made of the hero, to give variety to the story.

More variety and more unity may still, perhaps, seem desirable in the book. The episodes are strung together without much coherence, and without any attempt to develop either the plot or the characters. Sancho, to be sure, at last tastes the governorship of his Insula, and Don Quixote on his death-bed recovers his wits. But this conclusion, appropriate and touching as it is, might have come almost anywhere in the course of the story. The whole book has, in fact, rather the quality of an improvisation. The episodes suggest themselves to the author's fancy as he proceeds; a fact which gives them the same unexpectedness and sometimes the same incompleteness which the events of a journey naturally have. It is in the genius of this kind of narrative to be a sort of imaginary diary, without a general dramatic structure. The interest depends on the characters and the incidents alone; on the fertility of the author's invention, on the ingenuity of the turns he gives to the story, and on the incidental scenes and figures he describes.

When we have once accepted this manner of writing fiction—which might be called that of the novelist before the days of the novel—we can only admire the execution of *Don Quixote* as masterly in its kind. We find here an abundance of fancy that is never at a loss for some probable and interesting incident; we find a graphic power that makes living and unforgettable many a minor character, even if slightly sketched; we find the charm of the country rendered by little touches without any formal descriptions; and we find a humorous and minute reproduction of the manners of the time. All this is rendered in a flowing and easy style, abounding in both characterization and parody of diverse types of speech and composition; and the whole is still but the background for the figures of Don Quixote and Sancho, and for their pleasant discourse, the quality and savor of which is maintained to the end. These excel-

lences unite to make the book one of the most permanently delightful in the world, as well as one of the most diverting. Seldom has laughter been so well justified as that which the reading of *Don Quixote* continually provokes; seldom has it found its causes in such genuine fancy, such profound and real contrast, and such victorious good-humor.

We sometimes wish, perhaps, that our heroes were spared some of their bruises, and that we were not asked to delight so much in promiscuous beatings and floggings. But we must remember that these three hundred years have made the European race much more sensitive to physical suffering. Our ancestors took that doubtful pleasure in the idea of corporal writhings which we still take in the description of the tortures of the spirit. The idea of both evils is naturally distasteful to a refined mind; but we admit more willingly the kind which habit has accustomed us to regard as inevitable, and which personal experience very probably has made an old friend.

Don Quixote has accordingly enjoyed a universal popularity, and has had the singular privilege of accomplishing the object for which it was written, which was to recall fiction from the extravagances of the books of chivalry to the study of real life. This is the simple object which Cervantes had and avowed. He was a literary man with literary interests, and the idea which came to him was to ridicule the absurdities of the prevalent literary mode. The rich vein which he struck in the conception of *Don Quixote's* madness and topsy-turvy adventures encouraged him to go on. The subject and the characters deepened under his hands, until from a parody of a certain kind of romances the story threatened to become a satire on human idealism. At the same time Cervantes grew fond of his hero, and made him, as we must feel, in some sort a representative of his own chivalrous enthusiasms and constant disappointments.

We need not, however, see in this transformation any deep-laid malice or remote significance. As the tale opened out before the author's fancy and enlisted his closer and more loving attention, he naturally enriched it with all the wealth of his experience. Just as he diversified it with pictures of common life and manners, so he weighted it with the burden of human tragedy. He left upon it an impress of his own nobility and misfortunes side by side with a record of his time and country. But in this there was nothing inten-

tional. He only spoke out of the fullness of his heart. The highest motives and characters had been revealed to him by his own impulses, and the lowest by his daily experience.

There is nothing in the book that suggests a premeditated satire upon faith and enthusiasm in general. The author's evident purpose is to amuse, not to upbraid or to discourage. There is no bitterness in his pathos or despair in his disenchantment; partly because he retains a healthy fondness for this naughty world, and partly because his heart is profoundly and entirely Christian. He would have rejected with indignation an interpretation of his work that would see in it an attack on religion or even on chivalry. His birth and nurture had made him religious and chivalrous from the beginning, and he remained so by conviction to the end. He was still full of plans and hopes when death overtook him, but he greeted it with perfect simplicity, without lamentations over the past or anxiety for the future.

If we could have asked Cervantes what the moral of Don Quixote was to his own mind, he would have told us perhaps that it was this: that the force of idealism is wasted when it does not recognize the reality of things. Neglect of the facts of daily life made the absurdity of the romances of chivalry and of the enterprise of Don Quixote. What is needed is not, of course, that idealism should be surrendered, either in literature or in life; but that in both it should be made efficacious by a better adjustment to the reality it would transform.

Something of this kind would have been, we may believe, Cervantes's own reading of his parable. But when parables are such direct and full transcripts of life as is the story of Don Quixote, they offer almost as much occasion for diversity of interpretation as does the personal experience of men in the world. That the moral of Don Quixote should be doubtful and that each man should be tempted to see in it the expression of his own convictions, is after all the greatest possible encomium of the book. For we may infer that the truth has been rendered in it, and that men may return to it always, as to Nature herself, to renew their theories or to forget them, and to refresh their fancy with the spectacle of a living world.

SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING

1. To get the feel of using your thesis to connect beginning and end, and to see how even the work of experienced writers may sometimes be improved, rephrase the thesis in each of the five beginning-and-end examples in this section. As you go, match each of your thesis sentences with a "restated thesis" that would serve to open the ending paragraph. Example:

Wisdom is more precious than rubies.

Wisdom, then, is a great deal more precious and useful than rubies.

2. Write an essay on some point suggested by the first five writers, using (or attacking) a thesis like one of these:

(a) In the cause of science, lying is justified.

(b) Dr. Johnson was an In.

(c) The writer is free to choose his language.

(d) "Truth itself is indeterminate except in ideal terms."

(e) Some ideas should be excluded from the campus.

(f) Free enterprise is opportunity for all.

3. To see the way Santayana unfolds his thought paragraph by paragraph, draw up a list of topic sentences—one for each of his paragraphs, a total of twenty. Use his actual topic sentence when it seems to cover everything in the paragraph; when it seems inadequate, expand and sharpen it in your own words. Since the topic sentence in Santayana's first paragraph will also be his thesis sentence, you will find it at the *end* of the paragraph, right at the neck of his introductory funnel. But in each succeeding paragraph, the topic sentence will normally be at the *beginning*, announcing the paragraph's own little thesis. Be particularly careful in devising the topic sentence of the concluding paragraph; ideally, it should include and reaffirm the central thesis of the whole essay. Actually, the restated thesis seems to fall in the third paragraph from the end. Had you been his editor, would you have recommended that Santayana reparagraph his conclusion?

4. Write an essay illustrating from some experience or observation of your own that "The force of idealism is wasted when it does not recognize the reality of things."

5 / Sentences:

A Notebook of Styles

I THE SIMPLE SENTENCE

from *The True Believer* • ERIC HOFFER

from *On the Need for a Quiet College*

STEPHEN LEACOCK

from *Triple-threat Man* • WOLCOTT GIBBS

II COORDINATION

from *The Beautiful Flower* • JOSEPH MITCHELL

Better Writing • HENRY M. SILVER

III SUBORDINATION

from *Death in the Afternoon* • ERNEST HEMINGWAY

from *Henry James: Symbolic Imagery*

in the Later Novels • AUSTIN WARREN

IV PARALLELS AND PERIODIC PROSE

Of Studies • FRANCIS BACON

from *Liberal Knowledge* • JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

from *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

JAMES JOYCE

V THE LONG AND SHORT

from *Point Counter Point* • ALDOUS HUXLEYfrom *Epilogue to Pygmalion* • GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

WITH WRITING as with football, you need practice in doing all kinds of superhuman exercises so that, put to the test, you can carry your thought in any slippery field, and catch the concept that seems beyond all reach. Here, then, are various styles of sentence to exercise your pen. They run from the simple to the extremely complex—as the writers' thoughts and temperaments grow more subtle. In following the thoughts, try to enjoy each for its rhythmic handling, keeping your eyes open for the way the feat is done. You will be asked to imitate them, to limber and stretch your muscles. Once you have tried the extremes of simplicity and complexity, you can find your own middle ground, and hold it too, since you now can cover both extremes. Each author, of course, writes more than one kind of sentence, but each clearly prefers a particular kind, as the following groups show.

GROUP I. THE SIMPLE SENTENCE. Writers like Hoffer, Leacock, and Gibbs demonstrate how even the simple straightforward sentence offers wide variety. Hoffer uses it directly and epigrammatically, as if he were writing proverbs: "We cannot hate those we despise." Leacock and Gibbs, in different ways, arch the simple sentence into interesting interruptions and extensions: ". . . it doesn't take many—stone, if possible—and a belfry and a clock."

GROUP II. COORDINATION. Mitchell and Silver show two kinds of coordination, the "equal ordering" of equivalent clauses (or sentences) by linking them in a straight line with *and*'s or semicolons, or by letting them stand as simple sentences in a row.

GROUP III. SUBORDINATION. Here the writer's thought grows subtle as to his main clause he adds thoughts of less importance, tying them in with prepositions, relative pronouns, or any other subordinating word—*with*, *in*, *who*, *which*, *when*.

GROUP IV. PARALLELS AND PERIODIC PROSE. These writers, demonstrating additional varieties of coordination and subordination, emphasize parallels in their construction; that is, they put equivalent thoughts into identical phrases and repeat the words linking them—as in Bacon's *for*, Newman's *however enlightened* and *how-*

ever profound, or Joyce's *that as*. Notice how often their sentences are "periodic," suspending or holding back some part of the meaning until it can be dropped into place at the period.

GROUP V. THE LONG AND SHORT. Huxley and Shaw work long and short sentences in rhythmic spans and contrasts. From a simple short sentence, they will move ahead in lengthening strides, only to come short for emphasis and then move on again.

I / *The Simple Sentence*

from *The True Believer*

ERIC HOFFER

IT IS EASIER to hate an enemy with much good in him than one who is all bad. We cannot hate those we despise. The Japanese had an advantage over us in that they admired us more than we admired them. They could hate us more fervently than we could hate them. The Americans are poor haters in international affairs because of their innate feeling of superiority over all foreigners. An American's hatred for a fellow American (for Hoover or Roosevelt) is far more virulent than any antipathy he can work up against foreigners. It is of interest that the backward South shows more xenophobia than the rest of the country. Should Americans begin to hate foreigners wholeheartedly, it will be an indication that they have lost confidence in their own way of life.

The undercurrent of admiration in hatred manifests itself in the inclination to imitate those we hate. Thus every mass movement shapes itself after its specific devil. Christianity at its height realized the image of the antichrist. The Jacobins practiced all the evils of the tyranny they had risen against. Soviet Russia is realizing the purest and most colossal example of monopolistic capitalism. Hitler took the Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion for his guide and textbook; he followed them "down to the veriest detail."

It is startling to see how the oppressed almost invariably shape themselves in the image of their hated oppressors. That the evil

men do lives after them is partly due to the fact that those who have reason to hate the evil most shape themselves after it and thus perpetuate it. It is obvious, therefore, that the influence of the fanatic is bound to be out of all proportion to his abilities. Both by converting and antagonizing, he shapes the world in his own image. Fanatic Christianity put its imprint upon the ancient world both by gaining adherents and by evoking in its pagan opponents a strange fervor and a new ruthlessness. Hitler imposed himself upon the world both by promoting Nazism and by forcing the democracies to become zealous, intolerant and ruthless. Communist Russia shapes both its adherents and its opponents in its own image.

Thus, though hatred is a convenient instrument for mobilizing a community for defense, it does not, in the long run, come cheap. We pay for it by losing all or many of the values we have set out to defend.

from *On the Need for a Quiet College*

STEPHEN LEACOCK

IF SOMEBODY WOULD GIVE me about two dozen very old elm trees and about fifty acres of wooded ground and lawn—not too near anywhere and not too far from everywhere—I think I could set up a college that would put all the big universities of today in the shade. I am not saying that it would be better. But it would be different.

I would need a few buildings, but it doesn't take many—stone, if possible—and a belfry and a clock. The clock wouldn't need to go; it might be better if it didn't. I would want some books—a few thousand would do—and some apparatus. But it's amazing how little apparatus is needed for scientific work of the highest quality: in fact "the higher the fewer."

Most of all, I should need a set of professors. I would need only a dozen of them—but they'd have to be real ones—disinterested men of learning, who didn't even know they were disinterested. And, mind you, these professors of mine wouldn't sit in "offices"

dictating letters on "cases" to stenographers, and only leaving their offices to go to "committees" and "conferences." There would be no "offices" in my college and no "committees," and my professors would have no time for conferences, because the job they would be on would need all eternity and would never be finished.

My professors would never be findable at any fixed place except when they were actually giving lectures. Men of thought have no business in an office. Learning runs away from "committee." There would be no "check up" on the time of the professors: there would be no "hire and fire" or "judge by results" or "standards" or "norms" of work for them: or any fixed number of hours.

But, on the other hand, they would, if I got the ones I want, be well worth their apparent irresponsibility: and when they lectured each one would be, though he wouldn't know it, a magician—with such an interest and absorption that those who listened would catch the infection of it, and hurry from the lecture to the library, still warm with thought.

Triple-threat Man

WOLCOTT GIBBS

TWICE IN MY LIFE, for reasons that escape me now, though I'm sure they were discreditable, I allowed myself to be persuaded that I ought to take a hand in turning out a musical comedy. Both these ventures reached Broadway, though my connection with them had ceased long before that, and both closed with inconceivable rapidity. A writer, I suppose, discovers the limits of his talent only through a system of trial and error, and, whatever else I may have learned from these two fiascos, I came away from them knowing surely and forever that this particular form of art was not for me. This intelligence, in addition to serving a useful purpose—there is too little time for a man to waste any of it on lost causes—produced in me a feeling of nearly perfect detachment. It is an embarrassing fact that I seldom see a straight play, either a comedy or a drama, without the conviction that if I had been asked, I could

have provided the author with several very valuable suggestions. A musical, however, is quite another matter. I have no idea how the damn things get there in the first place—by what weird midnight prodigies of collaboration—and I certainly have no coherent advice to offer anyone about fixing things up, being comparatively accomplished only in the construction of English sentences, a knack approximately as useful in these entertainments as the ability to knit.

This lack of the writer's habitual nagging instinct to improve, coupled with an indifference to the form as a means of personal expression, makes me, of course, the practically ideal (or totally disembodied) critic of all musical comedies, and we will proceed immediately to the one called "The Music Man," which is now turning thousands away from the box office at the Majestic. This piece, the all but unassisted work of Meredith Willson, who contrived the book, the music, and the lyrics, received about the most remarkable set of notices in my memory, being greeted by one stunned worshipper as one of the three most exhilarating experiences he had undergone in the theatre in twenty-six years, and by his colleagues as an offering comparing very favorably with "Oklahoma!," "Guys and Dolls," "My Fair Lady," and almost anything else you care to name. I myself have nothing against "The Music Man," regarding it, in fact, as an exceptionally cheerful offering, but it is not as good as all that.

II / *Coordination*

from *The Beautiful Flower*

JOSEPH MITCHELL

IN THE EARLY THIRTIES, I covered Police Headquarters at night for a newspaper, and I often ate in a restaurant named the Grotta Azzurra, which is only a block over, at the southwest corner of Broome and Mulberry, and stays open until two. I still go down there every now and then. The Grotta Azzurra is a classical downtown New York South Italian restaurant: it is a family enterprise, it is in the basement of a tenement, it has marble steps, it displays in a row of bowls propped up on a table dry samples of all the kinds of *pasta* it serves, its kitchen is open to view through an arch, and it has scenes of the Bay of Naples painted on its walls. Among its specialties is striped bass cooked in clam broth with clams, mussels, shrimp, and squid, and it may be possible to find a better fish-and-shellfish dish in one of the great restaurants of the world, but I doubt it. I had a late dinner in the Grotta Azzurra one Sunday night recently, and then sat and talked for a while with two of the waiters at a table in back. We talked about the upheavals in the Police Department under Commissioner Adams; a good many police officials eat in the Grotta Azzurra, and the waiters take an interest in police affairs. I left around midnight and walked west on Broome, heading for the subway. At the northeast corner of Broome and Cleveland Place, just across Broome from Headquarters, there is an eight-story brick building that is called Police Headquarters

Annex. It is a dingy old box of a building; it was originally a factory, a Loft candy factory. It houses the Narcotics Squad, the Pickpocket and Confidence Squad, the Missing Persons Bureau, the Bureau of Criminal Information, and a number of other specialized squads and bureaus. I was about halfway up the block when a middle-aged man carrying a briefcase came out of the Annex and started across the street, and as he passed under a street lamp I saw that he was a detective I used to know quite well named Daniel J. Campion. I was surprised that he should be coming out of the Annex at that hour, particularly on a Sunday night, for some months earlier I had heard in the Grotta Azzurra that he had retired from the Police Department on a pension of thirty-five hundred dollars a year and had gone to work for the Pinkertons, the big private-detective agency. He was an Acting Captain when he retired, and the commanding officer of the Pickpocket and Confidence Squad. He had been a member of this squad for over twenty-five years, and had long been considered the best authority in the United States on pickpockets, confidence-game operators, and swindlers. He was also the Department's expert on gypsies. . . .

Better Writing

HENRY M. SILVER

THERE IS ONE, but one, certain way to reduce the cost of printing, and that is to sell more copies of what you print. This needs no demonstration; it is in the axiom class. Similarly there is only one way to sell more copies, and that is to write so that more people can understand what you have to say and are attracted by the way you say it. This applies even to specialized books. The marginal sales achieved by clarity and order may not numerically be great but they have their effect. A book which costs \$3.38 per copy in an edition of 500 will cost \$1.97 in an edition of 1,000—if all are sold.

This matter of improving the writing of scholarship is approached too often on tiptoe or hurried by. It must be faced. At a recent session on scholarly communication there was more time

devoted to television than to books. One graduate dean and one commercial publisher made concrete appeals for better writing. Discreet pauses followed; then the discussion hastened on to other matters.

The reason for this discretion must be a feeling that better writing is not achieved but is inherited, through one's genes; you have it or you don't. This is contrary to available testimony. Better writing is self-discipline and a willingness to take pains. Was it not Pascal who apologized for writing a long letter by saying he did not have time to write a shorter? Better scholarly writing is a willingness to do it all over again, striking out redundancies, making two sentences out of one, pausing at each multicellular expression to see if a plain word will not do instead. Those who will not take the time to do these things belong to the "adumbrate" school of writing. The books produced by the members of this flourishing academy do not circulate widely. Perhaps they gain distinction from scarcity. Certainly they achieve higher printing cost.

Better writing is not the ornament of scholarship; it is an element essential to the reduction of printing expense.

III / *Subordination*

from *Death in the Afternoon*

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

CAGANCHO IS A GYPSY, subject to fits of cowardice, altogether without integrity, who violates all the rules, written and unwritten, for the conduct of a matador but who, when he receives a bull that he has confidence in, and he has confidence in them very rarely, can do things which all bullfighters do in a way they have never been done before and sometimes standing absolutely straight with his feet still, planted as though he were a tree, with the arrogance and grace that gypsies have and of which all other arrogance and grace seems an imitation, moves the cape spread full as the pulling jib of a yacht before the bull's muzzle so slowly that the art of bullfighting, which is only kept from being one of the major arts because it is impermanent, in the arrogant slowness of his veronicas becomes, for the seeming minutes that they endure, permanent. That is the worst sort of flowery writing, but it is necessary to try to give the feeling, and to some one who has never seen it a simple statement of the method does not convey the feeling. Any one who has seen bullfights can skip such flowerishness and read the facts which are much more difficult to isolate and state. The fact is that the gypsy, Cagancho, can sometimes, through the marvellous wrists that he has, perform the usual movements of bullfighting so slowly that they become, to oldtime bullfighting, as the slow motion picture is to the ordinary motion picture. It is as though a diver could control

his speed in the air and prolong the vision of a swan dive, which is a jerk in actual life, although in photographs it seems a long glide, to make it a long glide like the dives and leaps we sometimes take in dreams. Other bullfighters who have or have had this ability with their wrists are Juan Belmonte and, occasionally with the cape, Enrique Torres and Felix Rodriguez.

from *Henry James: Symbolic Imagery* in the *Later Novels*

AUSTIN WARREN

THE GENERAL OCCASIONS of the "last period" are tolerably clear, if scarcely of the same order of being. There is, first, the gradual loss of the larger audience reached by *Daisy Miller* and the novels of Howells; then, the judgment that country-house week ends and the "season" in London had already provided saturation; then, the shift, in compositional method, from writing to dictation; then, the impetus of admiration from sympathetic younger writers and the allied, induced, partial participation in the new literary movement of the nineties, the "aesthetic" movement associated with the names of Pater, Wilde, Harland, the *Yellow Book*, and—by extension—of Stevenson, Conrad, Crane, Ford Madox Ford; then, the just completed period of writing for the theater, which produced not only *Guy Domville* but also a conception of the novel as drama; last, the influence, through Maeterlinck and, especially, the later Ibsen, of *symbolisme*, and the return thereby to Hawthorne and a deeper psychology.

The retirement to Rye, which occurred in 1897 when James was fifty-four, distinguished between his life of experience and his life from "past accumulations" (as he once called it). His peregrinations over, he set himself, masterwise, to producing a world compact of all that he had been able, coherently, to think and feel.

Then the process of dictation, beginning with *The Spoils of*

Poynton, had its psychological and stylistic consequences. A timid, slow-speaking, stammering boy, Henry had rarely been able to make himself heard at the parental breakfast table. Dictation offered dictatorship: his own voice, uninterrupted by those of more rapid speakers, enabled him to have his oral say in a style which is nearer to his father's than to William's, but slower than his father's. Henry's later manner is an allegro slowed down to a largo, the conversational in apotheosis. "Literary" as, all sprinkled with its commas of parenthesis, it looks on paper, it is an oral style; and, verifiably, it becomes clear, almost luminous, if recommitted to the voice.

IV / *Parallels and Periodic Prose*

Of Studies

FRANCIS BACON

STUDIES SERVE for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight, is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business. For expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs, come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humour of a scholar. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed, and digested; that is, some books are to read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the

less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books; else distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy things. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. And therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit; and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtle; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend. *Abeunt studia in mores*. Nay, there is no stond or impediment in the wit, but may be wrought out by fit studies: like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises. Bowling is good for the stone and reins; shooting for the lungs and breast; gentle walking for the stomach; riding for the head, and the like. So if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away ever so little, he must begin again. If his wit be not apt to distinguish and find differences, let him study the schoolmen, for they are *cymini sectores*. If he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases. So every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.

from *Liberal Knowledge*

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

. . . KNOWLEDGE IS ONE THING, virtue is another; good sense is not conscience, refinement is not humility, nor is largeness and justness of view faith. Philosophy, however enlightened, however profound, gives no command over the passions, no influential motives, no vivifying principles. Liberal Education makes not the Christian, not the Catholic, but the gentleman. It is well to be a gentleman, it is well to have a cultivated intellect, a delicate taste, a candid, equitable, dispassionate mind, a noble and courteous bearing in the conduct of life;—these are the connatural qualities of a large knowledge; they are the objects of a University; I am advocating, I shall illustrate and insist upon them; but still, I repeat, they are no

guarantee for sanctity or even for conscientiousness, they may attach to the man of the world, to the profligate, to the heartless,—pleasant, alas, and attractive as he shows when decked out in them. Taken by themselves, they do but seem to be what they are not; they look like virtue at a distance, but they are detected by close observers, and on the long run; and hence it is that they are popularly accused of pretence and hypocrisy, not, I repeat, from their own fault, but because their professors and their admirers persist in taking them for what they are not, and are officious in arrogating for them a praise to which they have no claim. Quarry the granite rock with razors, or moor the vessel with a thread of silk; then may you hope with such keen and delicate instruments as human knowledge and human reason to contend against those giants, the passion and the pride of man.

Surely we are not driven to theories of this kind, in order to vindicate the value and dignity of Liberal Knowledge. Surely the real grounds on which its pretensions rest are not so very subtle or abstruse, so very strange or improbable. Surely it is very intelligible to say, and that is what I say here, that Liberal Education, viewed in itself, is simply the cultivation of the intellect, as such, and its object is nothing more or less than intellectual excellence. . . .

from *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

JAMES JOYCE

HE DREW FORTH a phrase from his treasure and spoke it softly to himself:

—A day of dappled seaborne clouds.—

The phrase and the day and the scene harmonised in a chord. Words. Was it their colours? He allowed them to glow and fade, hue after hue: sunrise gold, the russet and green of apple orchards, azure of waves, the grey-fringed fleece of clouds. No, it was not

their colours: it was the poise and balance of the period itself. Did he then love the rhythmic rise and fall of words better than their associations of legend and colour? Or was it that, being as weak of sight as he was shy of mind, he drew less pleasure from the reflection of the glowing sensible world through the prism of a language many-coloured and richly storied than from the contemplation of an inner world of individual emotions mirrored perfectly in a lucid supple periodic prose?

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. . . . His father's whistle, his mother's mutterings, the screech of an unseen maniac were to him now so many voices of offending and threatening to humble the pride of his youth. He drove their echoes even out of his heart with an execration: but, as he walked down the avenue and felt the grey morning light falling about him through the dripping trees and smelt the strange wild smell of the wet leaves and bark, his soul was loosed of her miseries.

The rain laden trees of the avenue evoked in him, as always, memories of the girls and women in the plays of Gerhart Hauptmann; and the memory of their pale sorrows and the fragrance falling from the wet branches mingled in a mood of quiet joy. His morning walk across the city had begun; and he foreknew that as he passed the sloblands of Fairview he would think of the cloistral silverveined prose of Newman; that as he walked along the North Strand Road, glancing idly at the windows of the provision shops, he would recall the dark humour of Guido Cavalcanti and smile; that as he went by Baird's stone cutting works in Talbot Place the spirit of Ibsen would blow through him like a keen wind, a spirit of wayward boyish beauty; and that passing a grimy marine dealer's shop beyond the Liffey he would repeat the song by Ben Jonson which begins:

I was not wearier where I lay.

V / *The Long and Short*

from *Point Counter Point*

ALDOUS HUXLEY

MEANWHILE THE MUSIC played on—Bach's Suite in B minor, for flute and strings. Young Tolley conducted with his usual inimitable grace, bending in swan-like undulations from the loins and tracing luscious arabesques on the air with his waving arms, as though he were dancing to the music. A doxen anonymous fiddlers and cellists scraped at his bidding. And the great Pongileoni glueily kissed his flute. He blew across the mouth hole and a cylindrical air column vibrated; Bach's meditations filled the Roman quadrangle. In the opening *largo* John Sebastian had, with the help of Pongileoni's snout and the air column, made a statement: There are grand things in the world, noble things; there are men born kingly; there are real conquerors, intrinsic lords of the earth. But of an earth that is, oh! complex and multitudinous, he had gone on to reflect in the fugal *allegro*. You seem to have found the truth; clear, definite, unmistakable, it is announced by the violins; you have it, you triumphantly hold it. But it slips out of your grasp to present itself in a new aspect among the cellos and yet again in terms of Pongileoni's vibrating air column. The parts live their separate lives; they touch, their paths cross, they combine for a moment to create a seemingly final and perfected harmony, only to break apart again. Each is always alone and separate and individual. "I am I," asserts the violin; "the world revolves round me." "Round me,"

calls the cello. "Round me," the flute insists. And all are equally right and equally wrong; and none of them will listen to the others.

In the human fugue there are eighteen hundred million parts. The resultant noise means something perhaps to the statistician, nothing to the artist. It is only by considering one or two parts at a time that the artist can understand anything. Here, for example, is one particular part; and John Sebastian puts the case. The Rondeau begins, exquisitely and simply melodious, almost a folk song. It is a young girl singing to herself of love, in solitude, tenderly mournful. A young girl singing among the hills, with the clouds drifting overhead. But solitary as one of the floating clouds, a poet had been listening to her song. The thoughts that it provoked in him are the Sarabande that follows the Rondeau. His is a slow and lovely meditation on the beauty (in spite of squalor and stupidity), the profound goodness (in spite of all the evil), the oneness (in spite of such bewildering diversity) of the world. It is a beauty, a goodness, a unity that no intellectual research can discover, that analysis dispels, but of whose reality the spirit is from time to time suddenly and overwhelmingly convinced. A girl singing to herself under the clouds suffices to create the certitude. Even a fine morning is enough. Is it illusion or the revelation of profoundest truth? Who knows? Pongileoni blew, the fiddlers drew their rosined horsehair across the stretched intestines of lambs; through the long Sarabande the poet slowly meditated his lovely and consoling certitude.

from *Epilogue to Pygmalion*

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

[CLARA] WAS, in short, an utter failure, an ignorant, incompetent, pretentious, unwelcome, penniless, useless little snob; and though she did not admit these disqualifications (for nobody ever faces unpleasant truths of this kind until the possibility of a way out dawns on them) she felt their effects too keenly to be satisfied with her position.

Clara had a startling eyeopener when, on being suddenly wakened to enthusiasm by a girl of her own age who dazzled her and produced in her a gushing desire to take her for a model, and gain her friendship, she discovered that this exquisite apparition had graduated from the gutter in a few months time. It shook her so violently, that when Mr. H. G. Wells lifted her on the point of his puissant pen, and placed her at the angle of view from which the life she was leading and the society to which she clung appeared in its true relation to real human needs and worthy social structure, he effected a conversion and a conviction of sin comparable to the most sensational feats of General Booth or Gypsy Smith. Clara's snobbery went bang. Life suddenly began to move with her. Without knowing how or why, she began to make friends and enemies. Some of the acquaintances to whom she had been a tedious or indifferent or ridiculous affliction, dropped her: others became cordial. To her amazement she found that some "quite nice" people were saturated with Wells, and that this accessibility to ideas was the secret of their niceness. People she had thought deeply religious, and had tried to conciliate on that tack with disastrous results, suddenly took an interest in her, and revealed a hostility to conventional religion which she had never conceived possible except among the most desperate characters. They made her read Galsworthy; and Galsworthy exposed the vanity of Large-lady Park and finished her. It exasperated her to think that the dungeon in which she had languished for so many unhappy years had been unlocked all the time, and that the impulses she had so carefully struggled with and stifled for the sake of keeping well with society, were precisely those by which alone she could have come into any sort of sincere human contact. In the radiance of these discoveries, and the tumult of their reaction, she made a fool of herself as freely and conspicuously as when she so rashly adopted Eliza's expletive in Mrs Higgins's drawing room; for the new-born Wellsian had to find her bearings almost as ridiculously as a baby; but nobody hates a baby for its ineptitudes, or thinks the worse of it for trying to eat the matches; and Clara lost no friends by her follies. They laughed at her to her face this time; and she had to defend herself and fight it out as best she could.

SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING

1. Now, to stretch those muscles, imitate or parody each of the authors in this chapter, two or three sentences for each passage.
2. Write a 100-word sentence, in which you subordinate everything to one, and only one, main clause. You might look at Warren's second sentence (140 words); or you might start with a series of parallel clauses—"When I sit down to write, when I try to think of something to say, when no ideas seem to come at all . . ."—and—who knows?—you may end with a cloistral silver-veined period worthy of Newman.
3. Write four or five epigrammatic sentences like Hoffer's "We cannot hate those we despise" or ". . . every mass movement shapes itself after its specific devil."
4. Now take these same sentences and see if you can enhance them by springing them apart with interruptive phrases and clauses, and by extending them with further subordination: "We cannot—even if we wish—hate those we despise, because we despise only those beneath our contempt."
5. Write a page or so, attempting as wide a variety of short and long sentences as you can manage. Follow a long one with one extremely short; then lengthen your steps to long again, as with "Clara's snobbery went bang" and its successors in Shaw's passage.

Sentences in Exposition

The Evolution of Ethics • ALBERT SCHWEITZER

The Real Secret of Piltdown • LOREN EISELEY

The Sentence Maker • HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

Science and the Savages • G. K. CHESTERTON

HERE IS STYLE in pursuit of clarity, as the author measures out his thought to persuade his reader. Each writer is explaining something he believes highly significant. Of his essay, Schweitzer wrote Mrs. Carleton Smith, who translated it from the French: "This is something very important to me, as it expresses the dominating idea in my thinking." Schweitzer's sentences, skillfully reproduced by Mrs. Smith, are simple and unadorned. His thinking is straightforward and generally "coordinate." Eiseley, also pursuing the clear statement, nevertheless runs to subordination, as in the second sentences of his first two paragraphs. The simple question that he raises draws a multiple explanation, thoughtfully ranked and balanced; and his subordination swells in grander segments as, toward the end, he marvels at the galaxy overhead. Chesterton, like Schweitzer, is basically coordinate: "The answer to the riddle is in England; it is in London; nay, it is in his own heart." But like an orator, he runs his coordinates in parallel and contrasts them epigrammati-

cally: "student of nature" against "student of human nature," for instance. He also can subordinate—as with "man of science" in his second paragraph—and play off short against long.

Canby's essay on Thoreau may serve to summarize the evidence of this section: a writer's sentences—his style—are the writer's very *self*, engaging his particular subject and trying to engage his general reader. To some extent the subject, to some extent the audience, conditions the style; but the author chooses the subject and the word, and his disposition moves his sentences as he develops his style somewhere between the need to express and the need to communicate. Thoreau is mostly concerned with expression—with getting the inside out—and certainly this is the deeper side; for true expression will communicate, but pure communication may be untrue.

To heighten your sense that style may be the man, and that writing shows character, try to form an idea of each writer's personality as you read. Keep an eye on the play of length in his sentences, and be on watch for things from the physical world—sticks, stones, apples, trees. Which writer's sentences have the highest physical contents? When does a man seem to reach for metaphor?

The Evolution of Ethics

ALBERT SCHWEITZER

IN A VERY GENERAL SENSE, ethics is the name we give to our concern for good behavior. We feel an obligation to consider not only our own personal well-being but also that of others and of human society as a whole, and it is in the extension of this notion of solidarity with others that the first evolution of ethics is to be seen.

For the primitive man the circle of solidarity is limited to those whom he can look upon as his blood relatives—that is to say, the members of his tribe, who are to him his family. I am speaking from experience. In my hospital I have primitives. When I happen to ask a hospitalized tribesman, who is not himself bedridden, to render little services to a bedridden patient, he will consent only if the latter belongs to his tribe. If not, he will answer me candidly:

"This, no brother for me," and neither attempts to persuade him nor threats will make him do this favor for a stranger.

However, as man starts reflecting upon himself and his behavior toward others, he gradually realizes that all men are his brothers and neighbors. Slowly he reaches a point where he sees the circle of his responsibilities enlarged to comprise all human beings with whom he is in contact.

In the history of man, this idea of responsibility toward others has been wholly or partially formulated in various cultures at various times. It was reached by the Chinese thinkers: Lao-tse, born in 604 B.C.; Kung Fu-tse (Confucius), 551-479 B.C.; Meng-tse, 372-289 B.C.; Tchouang-tse, fourth century B.C. It was also proclaimed by the Israelite prophets of the eighth century B.C.: Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. As proclaimed by Jesus and Saint Paul, the idea that man obligates himself to all human beings became an integral part of the Christian system of ethics.

For the great thinkers of India, too, whether they belonged to Brahmanism, Buddhism, or Hinduism, the idea of the brotherhood of man was included in their metaphysical notion of existence, but they had difficulty giving it the proper importance in their ethics because they could not abolish the barriers erected between men in India by the different castes sanctioned by tradition.

Zarathustra, who lived in about the seventh century B.C., was also prevented from reaching the notion of the full brotherhood of man because he had to differentiate between those who believed in Ormuzd, the god of Light and Good, and the nonbelievers who remained in the power of devils. This forced the believers to fight for the coming of the reign of Ormuzd and to consider the nonbelievers as enemies and treat them as such. To understand this, one must remember that the believers were Bactrian tribes who had become sedentary and aspired to live as honest and peaceful families, while the nonbelievers were nomadic tribes who dwelt in the desert and lived from pillage.

Plato and Aristotle and the other thinkers of the classic period of Greek philosophy limited their consideration to the Greek free-man, who did not have to earn his subsistence. All those who did not belong to this aristocracy were dismissed as men of inferior quality in whom there was no need to be concerned.

It was not until the second epoch of Greek thought, when the simultaneous blossoming of Stoicism and Epicureanism occurred,

that the idea of the equality of men and of the sympathy which attaches us to all human beings was recognized by these two schools. The most remarkable protagonist of this new conception was the Stoic Panaetius, who lived in the second century B.C. He was the prophet of humanism, and even though the idea of the brotherhood of man never became popular in antiquity, the very fact that philosophy had proclaimed it as a concept dictated by reason was of great importance for its future.

However, this concept has never enjoyed the full authority which it deserves. Down to our time, it has ceaselessly been compromised by the stressing of differences—differences of race, of religious beliefs, and of nationalities—which turn our fellow man into a stranger to whom we owe nothing but indifference, if not contempt.

As we trace the evolution of ethics, we are aware of the influence exerted by the various concepts of the material world. There are the affirmative concepts which insist that interest must be taken in material matters and in the existence we lead on this earth. Others, on the contrary, advocate a negative attitude, urging that we detach ourselves from whatever has to do with the world, including our own existence on earth. Affirmation conforms with our natural feeling. Negation contradicts it. Affirmation invites us to be at home in this world and to throw ourselves voluntarily into action; negation requires that we live in the world as strangers and that we choose a passive role. By its very nature, ethics is affiliated with affirmation. One must be active if one is to serve the ideal of Good. An affirmative concept of the world produces a favorable climate for the development of ethics, while negation, on the contrary, hampers it. Negation of the world was professed by the thinkers of India and by the Christians of antiquity and of the Middle Ages; affirmation by the Chinese thinkers, the Israelite prophets, Zaratustra, and the European thinkers of the Renaissance and of the modern day.

In the thinkers of India, this negative concept of the world was the result of their conviction that true existence is immaterial, immutable, and external and that the worldly existence is fictitious, deceitful, and transient. The world that we consider as real was for them but a mirage of the immaterial world in time and space. By taking interest in this phantasmagoria and in the part he plays in it, they argued, man made a mistake. The only behavior com-

patible with the true knowledge of the nature of existence is non-activity.

To a degree, nonactivity does have ethical characteristics. By detaching himself from worldly matters, man renounces the egotism that material interests and mere covetousness arouse in him. Furthermore, an essential aspect of nonactivity is nonviolence.

The thinkers of Brahmanism, of Samkhya, of Jainism, as well as of Buddhism, exalt nonviolence, which they call *ahimsa*; indeed, they consider it as the sublime principle. However, it is imperfect and incomplete because it concedes to man the egotism to be preoccupied entirely with his salvation. It does not command him in the name of compassion but in the name of metaphysical theories. It demands merely abstention from evil, rather than the positive activity inspired by the notion of Good.

Only a system of ethics affiliated with the affirmation of the world can be natural and complete. Buddha, who rises against the cold Brahmanic doctrine by preaching pity, cannot completely resist the temptation to forgo the principle of nonactivity. He gives in, more than once, unable to keep himself from accomplishing acts of charity or from recommending them to his disciples. Under the cover of ethics the affirmation of the world carries on, in India, a persistent struggle against the principle of nonactivity. In Hinduism, which is a religious movement against the exigencies of Brahmanism, affirmation is recognized as the equal of nonactivity. The reconciliation of the two is set forth in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Man can believe that he is authorized to take part in the material world only as a spectator. But likewise he has the right to believe that he is called to play an active part. Activity, then, is justified by the spirit which guides it. The man who practices it with the intention of accomplishing the will of God is as right as he who raises the question of nonactivity. Nowadays, the thinkers of India make great concessions to the principle of activity, claiming that it is found in the Upanishads. This is true. The explanation is that the Aryans of India in ancient times, as we learn it from the Veda, had an existence penetrated with naïve *joie de vivre*. The Brahmanic doctrine of negation of the world appears side by side with the concept of affirmation only in the Upanishads, the sacred texts of the first thousand years B.C.

Christianity in early times and in the Middle Ages professed negation of the world without, however, reaching the extremes of

nonactivity. Its denial of the world was of a different nature from that of the thinkers of India: to the early Christians the world was not a phantasmagoria, it was an imperfect world destined to be transformed into the perfect world of the kingdom of God. The idea of the kingdom of God was created by the Israelite prophets of the eighth century B.C.

In announcing the imminence of the transformation of the material world into the kingdom of God, Jesus exhorted men to seek the perfection required for participation in the new world. He asked man to detach himself from this world, the better to be preoccupied by the practice of Good. He allowed man to detach himself from material things, but not from his duties toward other men. In Jesus' ethics, activity kept all its rights and all its obligations. This is where Christianity differs from Buddha's religion, with which it shares the idea of compassion. Because it is animated by the spirit of activity, Christian ethics has a certain affinity with the affirmation of the world.

The transformation of the world into the kingdom of God was what the early Christians were looking for immediately, but it never occurred. During antiquity and the Middle Ages, Christianity remained in a situation of having to lose hope in this world, without the compensating hope, which had sustained the early Christians, of seeing the new world at hand. In the Middle Ages there was no enthusiastic affirmation of the world; actually this did not take place until the Renaissance. Christianity identified itself with this new enthusiastic affirmation of the world during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Renaissance ethics—apart from the ideal of perfecting oneself, which came from Jesus—attempted subsequently to create new and better material and spiritual conditions for the existence of human society. From then on, Christian ethics found a goal for its activity and so reached its full bloom. From the union of the Christian and the Renaissance enthusiasm for the world is born the civilization in which we live and which we have to maintain and improve.

In the first century of the Christian era, thinkers of Stoicism—Seneca, Epictetus, and the emperor Marcus Aurelius—following the steps of Panaetius, the creator of the idea of humanism, came to consider Love as the virtue of virtues. Their system of ethics is about the same as that of the great Chinese thinkers. They have

in common not only the principle of Love, but also the conviction that it proceeds from reason and is thoroughly reasonable.

During the first and second centuries of the Christian era, the Greco-Roman philosophy seemed to profess the same ethical ideal as that of Christianity. The possibility of agreement between the ancient and Christian worlds existed, but it did not happen. Ethical Stoicism did not become popular. Moreover, it accused Christianity of being a superstition because Christianity claimed that a divine revelation had taken place in Jesus Christ, and was awaiting the miraculous coming of a new world. Christianity, on the other hand, scorned philosophy as a guiding wisdom for this world. What separated Christianity and Stoicism was the fact that the Greco-Roman philosophy adhered to the idea of the affirmation of the world, whereas Christianity adhered to the idea of its negation. No agreement was possible.

Agreement did occur, but only after centuries. When Christianity became more familiar with the enthusiastic affirmation of the world, which the Renaissance had bequeathed to European thought; it at the same time became acquainted with ethical Stoicism and noted with surprise that Jesus' principle of Love had also been stated as a rational truth. Thus it was deduced that the fundamental ideas of religion were revealed truths, confirmed afterwards by reason. Among the thinkers who felt that they belonged to both Christianity and Stoicism were Erasmus and Hugo Grotius.

Under the influence of Christianity, philosophy's ethics acquired an enthusiasm that it had not possessed earlier. Under the influence of philosophy, Christian ethics, on the other hand, started reflecting upon what it owed itself and upon what it should accomplish in this world. Thus was born a spirit which did not allow the ethics of Love any longer to tolerate injustice, cruelties, and superstitions. Torture was abolished, the scourge of the witchcraft trials ceased. Inhuman laws gave way to others more human. A reform without precedent in the previous history of humanity had begun and was accomplished in the first enthusiasm of the discovery that the principle of Love is also taught by reason.

To demonstrate the rationality of altruism, philosophers of the eighteenth century, among whom are Hartley, Baron Holbach, Helvetius, and Bentham, thought that it was enough to show that love of others had a utility value. The Chinese thinkers and the

representatives of ethical Stoicism admitted the utility value, but also insisted on other values. According to the eighteenth-century thinkers, altruism would be a well-understood egotism, taking into account the fact that the well-being of the individual and of society can be guaranteed only by the self-sacrifice which men make for their fellow men.

Kant and David Hume refuted this superficial thesis. Kant, in order to defend the dignity of ethics, went so far as to pretend that its utility ought not to be taken into consideration. Obvious as it is, it must not be admitted as a motive of ethics. Ethics, according to the doctrine of the categorical imperative, rules absolutely. It is our conscience which reveals to us what is Good and what is evil. We have but to obey the moral law that we carry within ourselves to gain the certitude that we not only belong to the world as it appears to us in time and space, but that we are at the same time citizens of the spiritual world.

Hume, in order to refute the utilitarian thesis, proceeded in an empirical way. He analyzed the motives of ethics and came to the conclusion that ethics is primarily a matter of feeling. Nature, he argued, endowed us with the faculty of sympathy, which permits and obliges us to feel the joy, apprehensions, and sufferings of others as if they were our own. We are, after an image employed by Hume, like strings vibrating in unison with others. It is this sympathy which leads us to devotion toward others and to the desire to contribute to their well-being and to the well-being of society.

After Hume, philosophy—if we set aside the enterprise of Nietzsche—did not dare seriously to doubt the fact that ethics is primarily a matter of compassion.

But, if this is the case, is ethics capable of defining and setting a limit to the obligations of self-sacrifice, and thereby placing egoism and altruism in accord, as was attempted by the utilitarian theories?

Hume is not much preoccupied by this question. The philosophers who followed him likewise did not think it necessary to take into consideration the consequences of the principle of self-sacrifice through compassion. It is as if they had the presentiment that these consequences might prove to be a little disturbing.

They are indeed. The ethic of self-sacrifice by compassion no longer has the characteristic of a law. It no longer comprises any clearly established and clearly formulated commandments. It is

thoroughly subjective, because it leaves to each one the responsibility of deciding how much he will sacrifice himself.

And not only does it cease to give precise commandments: it is no longer satisfied, as the law must be, by the limitations of the possible. It constantly forces us to attempt the impossible, to carry devotion to others so far as to endanger our own existence. In the horrible times we have lived through, there were many of these perilous situations and many persons who sacrificed themselves for others. Even in daily life, the ethic of self-sacrifice asks from each of us that we abdicate selfish interests and renounce advantages for the sake of others. Alas, we too often succeed in silencing our conscience, the guardian of our feeling of responsibility.

How many are the struggles in which the ethic of self-sacrifice abandons us to ourselves! It is seldom that the heads of firms give a job, through compassion, to the man who needs it most, rather than to the man who is most qualified. But evil unto them who think themselves authorized, by such experiences, *never* to take into account the principle of compassion.

A final consequence is to be drawn from the principle of self-sacrifice: it does not allow us to be preoccupied only by human beings, but obliges us to have the same behavior toward all living beings whose fate may be influenced by us. They also are our fellows, for they, too, aspire to happiness. They know fear and suffering, and they dread annihilation.

The man who has kept intact his sensibility finds it quite natural to have pity on all living beings. Why does not philosophy at long last recognize that our behavior toward all life should be an integral part of the ethics which it teaches?

The reason is very simple. Philosophy fears, and rightly so, that this huge enlargement of the circle of our responsibilities will take away from ethics the small hope which it still has to formulate reasonable and satisfactory commandments.

In fact, if we are preoccupied by the fate of all living beings with whom we come in contact, we face conflicts more numerous and more disturbing than those of devotion toward human beings. We are constantly in situations which compel us to harm other creatures or affect their lives. The farmer cannot let all his animals survive. He can keep only those he can feed and the breeding of which assures him necessary income. In many instances, there is the obligation of sacrificing some lives to save others. Whoever shel-

ters a crippled bird finds it necessary to kill insects to feed him. In so doing, he makes an arbitrary decision. By what right does he sacrifice a multitude of lives in order to save a single life? He must also make an arbitrary choice when he exterminates animals which he thinks are harmful, in order to protect others.

It is then incumbent upon each of us to judge whether we must harm or kill, and thus become, by necessity, guilty. We should seek forgiveness by never missing an occasion to rescue living creatures.

What an advance it would be if men started to reflect upon the kindness due all creatures and refrained from harming them by carelessness! We must intensify the struggle against inhuman traditions and feelings remaining in our time if our civilization is to keep any respect for itself. Among inhuman customs which our civilization should no longer tolerate, I must name two: bullfights with their inevitable death, and hunting for sport.

It is finally the exigency of compassion with all beings which makes ethics as complete as it should be.

There is another great change in the evolution of ethics: today it cannot expect help from a concept of the world which justifies what it teaches.

In the past, ethics seemed convinced that it was only requiring a behavior in harmony with the knowledge of the true nature of the world. On this conviction are based not only the religions, but also the rationalist philosophy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

But it happens that the concept of the world that ethics called upon was the result of the optimistic interpretation of this very world which ethics gave and is still giving. It loaned to the universal will qualities and intentions which gave satisfaction to its own way of feeling and judging.

But in the course of the nineteenth century, research which seeks only objective truth was obliged to face the evidence that ethics had nothing to expect from an ever-closer knowledge of the world. The progress of science consisted in a more precise ascertainment of the processes of nature. It allowed us to use the energies of the universe. But, at the same time, it obliged us to renounce an understanding of the intentions of the universe. The world offers us the disconcerting spectacle of the will to live in conflict with itself. One life maintains itself at the cost of another. The world is hor-

ror within magnificence, absurdity within intelligibility, suffering within joy.

How can the ethic of self-sacrifice maintain itself without being justified by an adequate concept of the world? It seems doomed to sink into skepticism. This, however, will not be its fate.

In the beginning, ethics needed to call upon a concept of the world which gave it satisfaction. Having reached the knowledge that the fundamental principle is devotion to others, it becomes fully aware of itself, and thereby self-sufficient.

We are now able to understand its origins and its foundation by meditating upon the world and upon ourselves. We lack a complete and satisfactory knowledge of the world. We are reduced to merely ascertaining that everything in it is living, as we ourselves are, and that all life is a mystery. Our true knowledge of the world consists in being penetrated by the mystery of existence and of life. This mystery becomes ever more mysterious by the progress of scientific research. To be penetrated by the mystery of life corresponds to what is called in the language of the mystic "learned ignorance."

The fundamental idea in our conscience, to which we come back each time we want to reach comprehension of ourselves and of our situation in the world, is: I am life wanting to live, surrounded by life wanting to live. Meditating upon life, I feel the obligation to respect any will-to-live around me as equal to mine and as having a mysterious value.

A fundamental idea of Good then consists in preserving life, in favoring it, in wanting to raise it to its highest value, and evil consists in annihilating life, injuring it, and impeding its growth.

The principle of this veneration of life corresponds to the one of Love, which has been discovered by religion and philosophy seeking an understanding of the fundamental notion of Good.

The term Reverence for Life is larger and at the same time dimmer than the term Love. But it bears within itself the same potentialities. The essentially philosophical notion of Good has the advantage of being more complete than the notion of Love. Love comprises only our obligations toward other beings, but not toward ourselves. It is, for instance, impossible to deduce from it the notion of veracity, the primary quality of the ethical personality in addition to the one of Love. The respect which man owes to his

own life obliges him to be faithful to himself by renouncing any self-deceit and by becoming himself in the noblest and deepest way.

By having reverence for life, we enter into a spiritual relation with the world. The absolute is so abstract that we can have no communion with it. It is not given to us to serve the creative will, infinite and unfathomable, by comprehending its nature and its intentions. But we come into spiritual contact with it by the feeling of the mystery of life and by devoting ourselves to all the living beings whom we are able to serve.

The ethics which obliges us to be concerned only with men and with society cannot have this same significance. Only a universal ethics which obliges us to be occupied with all beings puts us in a complete relation with the universe and the will manifested in it.

In the world, the will to live is in conflict with itself. In us it wants, by a mystery that we do not understand, to be at peace with itself. In the world it manifests itself; in us it reveals itself. To be other than the world is our spiritual destiny. By conforming to it we live our existence instead of submitting to it. By practicing reverence for life we become good, deep, and alive.

The Real Secret of Piltdown

LOREN EISELEY

How DID MAN get his brain? Many years ago Charles Darwin's great contemporary, and co-discover with him of the principle of natural selection, Alfred Russel Wallace, propounded that simple question. It is a question which has bothered evolutionists ever since, and when Darwin received his copy of an article Wallace had written on this subject he was obviously shaken. It is recorded that he wrote in anguish across the paper, "No!" and underlined the "No" three times heavily in a rising fervor of objection.

Today the question asked by Wallace and never satisfactorily answered by Darwin has returned to haunt us. A skull, a supposedly very ancient skull, long used as one of the most powerful pieces

of evidence documenting the Darwinian position upon human evolution, has been proven to be a forgery, a hoax perpetrated by an unscrupulous but learned amateur. In the fall of 1953 the famous Piltdown cranium, known in scientific circles all over the world since its discovery in a gravel pit on the Sussex Downs in 1911, was jocularly dismissed by the world's press as the skull that had "made monkeys out of the anthropologists." Nobody remembered in 1953 that Wallace, the great evolutionist, had protested to a friend in 1913, "The Piltdown skull does not prove much, if anything!"

Why had Wallace made that remark? Why, almost alone among the English scientists of his time, had he chosen to regard with a dubious eye a fossil specimen that seemed to substantiate the theory to which he and Darwin had devoted their lives? He did so for one reason: he did not believe what the Piltdown skull appeared to reveal as to the nature of the process by which the human brain had been evolved. He did not believe in a skull which had a modern brain box attached to an apparently primitive face and given, in the original estimates, an antiquity of something over a million years.

Today we know that the elimination of the Piltdown skull from the growing list of valid human fossils in no way affects the scientific acceptance of the theory of evolution. In fact, only the circumstance that Piltdown had been discovered early, before we had a clear knowledge of the nature of human fossils and the techniques of dating them, made the long survival of this extraordinary hoax possible. Yet in the end it has been the press, absorbed in a piece of clever scientific detection, which has missed the real secret of Piltdown. Darwin saw in the rise of man, with his unique, time-spanning brain, only the undirected play of such natural forces as had created the rest of the living world of plants and animals. Wallace, by contrast, in the case of man, totally abandoned this point of view and turned instead toward a theory of a divinely directed control of the evolutionary process. The issue can be made clear only by a rapid comparison of the views of both men.

As everyone who has studied evolution knows, Darwin propounded the theory that since the reproductive powers of plants and animals potentially far outpace the available food supply, there is in nature a constant struggle for existence on the part of every living thing. Since animals vary individually, the most cleverly adapted will survive and leave offspring which will inherit, and

in their turn enhance, the genetic endowment they have received from their ancestors. Because the struggle for life is incessant, this unceasing process promotes endless slow changes in bodily form, as living creatures are subjected to different natural environments, different enemies, and all the vicissitudes against which life has struggled down the ages.

Darwin, however, laid just one stricture on his theory: it could, he maintained, "render each organized being only as perfect or a little more perfect than other inhabitants of the same country." It could allow any animal only a relative superiority, never an absolute perfection—otherwise selection and the struggle for existence would cease to operate. To explain the rise of man through the slow, incremental gains of natural selection, Darwin had to assume a long struggle of man with man and tribe with tribe.

He had to make this assumption because man had far outpaced his animal associates. Since Darwin's theory of the evolutionary process is based upon the practical value of all physical and mental characters in the life struggle, to ignore the human struggle of man with man would have left no explanation as to how humanity by natural selection alone managed to attain an intellectual status so far beyond that of any of the animals with which it had begun its competition for survival.

To most of the thinkers of Darwin's day this seemed a reasonable explanation. It was a time of colonial expansion and ruthless business competition. Peoples of primitive cultures, small societies lost on the world's margins, seemed destined to be destroyed. It was thought that Victorian civilization was the apex of human achievement and that other races with different customs and ways of life must be biologically inferior to Western man. Some of them were even described as only slightly superior to apes. The Darwinians, in a time when there were no satisfactory fossils by which to demonstrate human evolution, were unconsciously minimizing the abyss which yawned between man and ape. In their anxiety to demonstrate our lowly origins they were throwing modern natives into the gap as representing living "missing links" in the chain of human ascent.

It was just at this time that Wallace lifted a voice of lonely protest. The episode is a strange one in the history of science, for Wallace had, independently of Darwin, originally arrived at the same general conclusion as to the nature of the evolutionary process.

Nevertheless, only a few years after the publication of Darwin's work, *The Origin of Species*, Wallace had come to entertain a point of view which astounded and troubled Darwin. Wallace, who had had years of experience with natives of the tropical archipelagoes, abandoned the idea that they were of mentally inferior cast. He did more. He committed the Darwinian heresy of maintaining that their mental powers were far in excess of what they really needed to carry on the simple food-gathering techniques by which they survived.

"How, then," Wallace insisted, "was an organ developed so far beyond the needs of its possessor? Natural selection could only have endowed the savage with a brain a little superior to that of an ape, whereas he actually possesses one but little inferior to that of the average member of our learned societies."

At a time when many primitive people were erroneously assumed to speak only in grunts or to chatter like monkeys, Wallace maintained his view of the high intellectual powers of natives by insisting that "the capacity of uttering a variety of distinct articulate sounds and of applying to them an almost infinite amount of modulation . . . is not in any way inferior to that of the higher races. An instrument has been developed in advance of the needs of its possessor."

Finally, Wallace challenged the whole Darwinian position on man by insisting that artistic, mathematical, and musical abilities could not be explained on the basis of natural selection and the struggle for existence. Something else, he contended, some unknown spiritual element, must have been at work in the elaboration of the human brain. Why else would men of simple cultures possess the same basic intellectual powers which the Darwinists maintained could be elaborated only by competitive struggle?

"If you had not told me you had made these remarks," Darwin said, "I should have thought they had been added by someone else. I differ grievously from you and am very sorry for it." He did not, however, supply a valid answer to Wallace's queries. Outside of murmuring about the inherited effects of habit—a contention without scientific validity today—Darwin clung to his original position. Slowly Wallace's challenge was forgotten and a great complacency settled down upon the scientific world.

For seventy years after the publication of *The Origin of Species* in 1859, there were only two finds of fossil human skulls which

seemed to throw any light upon the Darwin-Wallace controversy. One was the discovery of the small-brained Java Ape Man, the other was the famous Piltdown or "dawn man." Both were originally dated as lying at the very beginning of the Ice Age, and, though these dates were later to be modified, the skulls, for a very long time, were regarded as roughly contemporaneous and very old.

Two more unlike "missing links" could hardly be imagined. Though they were supposed to share a million-year antiquity, the one was indeed quite primitive and small-brained; the other, Piltdown, in spite of what seemed a primitive lower face, was surprisingly modern in brain. Which of these forms told the true story of human development? Was a large brain old? Had ages upon ages of slow, incremental, Darwinian increase produced it? The Piltdown skull seemed to suggest such a development.

Many were flattered to find their anthropoid ancestry seemingly removed to an increasingly remote past. If one looked at the Java Ape Man, one was forced to contemplate an ancestor, not terribly remote in time, who still had a face and a brain which hinted strongly of the ape. Yet, when by geological evidence this "erect walking ape-man" was finally assigned to a middle Ice Age antiquity, there arose the immediate possibility that Wallace could be right in his suspicion that the human brain might have had a surprisingly rapid development. By contrast, the Piltdown remains seemed to suggest a far more ancient and slow-paced evolution of man. The Piltdown hoaxer, in attaching an ape jaw to a human skull fragment, had, perhaps unwittingly, created a creature which supported the Darwinian idea of man, not too unlike the man of today, extending far back into pre-Ice Age times.

Which story was the right one? Until the exposé of Piltdown in 1953, both theories had to be considered possible and the two hopelessly unlike fossils had to be solemnly weighed in the same balance. Today Piltdown is gone. In its place we are confronted with the blunt statement of two modern scientists, M. R. A. Chance and A. P. Mead.

"No adequate explanation," they confess over eighty years after Darwin scrawled his vigorous "No!" upon Wallace's paper, "has been put forward to account for so large a cerebrum as that found in man."

We have been so busy tracing the tangible aspects of evolution in the *forms of animals* that our heads, the little globes which hold the midnight sky and the shining, invisible universes of thought, have been taken about as much for granted as the growth of a yellow pumpkin in the fall.

Now a part of this mystery as it is seen by the anthropologists of today lies in the relation of the brain to time. "If," Wallace had said, "researches in all parts of Europe and Asia fail to bring to light any proofs of man's presence far back in the Age of Mammals, *it will be at least a presumption that he came into existence at a much later date and by a more rapid process of development.*" If human evolution should prove to be comparatively rapid, "explosive" in other words, Wallace felt that his position would be vindicated, because such a rapid development of the brain would, he thought, imply a divinely directed force at work in man. In the 1870's when he wrote, however, human prehistory was largely an unknown blank. Today we can make a partial answer to Wallace's question. Since the exposure of the Piltdown hoax all of the evidence at our command—and it is considerable—points to man, in his present form, as being one of the youngest and newest of all earth's swarming inhabitants.

The Ice Age extends behind us in time for, at most, a million years. Though this may seem long to one who confines his studies to the written history of man, it is, in reality, a very short period as the student of evolution measures time. It is a period marked more by the extinction of some of the last huge land animals, like the hairy mammoth and the saber-toothed tiger, than it is by the appearance of new forms of life. To this there is only one apparent exception: the rise and spread of man over the Old World land mass.

Most of our knowledge of him—even in his massive-faced, beetle-browed stage—is now confined, since the loss of Piltdown, to the last half of the Ice Age. If we pass backward beyond this point we can find traces of crude tools, stone implements which hint that some earlier form of man was present here and there in Europe, Asia, and particularly Africa in the earlier half of Ice Age time, but to the scientist it is like peering into the mists floating over an unknown landscape. Here and there through the swirling vapor one catches a glimpse of a shambling figure, or a half-wild primordial

face stares back at one from some momentary opening in the fog. Then, just as one grasps at a clue, the long gray twilight settles in and the wraiths and the half-heard voices pass away.

Nevertheless, particularly in Africa, a remarkable group of human-like apes have been discovered: creatures with small brains and teeth of a remarkably human cast. Prominent scientists are still debating whether they are on the direct line of ascent to man or are merely near relatives of ours. Some, it is now obvious, existed too late in time to be our true ancestors, though this does not mean that their bodily characters may not tell us what the earliest anthropoids who took the human turn of the road were like.

These apes are not all similar in type or appearance. They are men and yet not men. Some are frailer-bodied, some have great, bone-cracking jaws and massive gorilloid crests atop their skulls. This fact leads us to another of Wallace's remarkable perceptions of long ago. With the rise of the truly human brain, Wallace saw that man had transferred to his machines and tools many of the alterations of parts that in animals take place through evolution of the body. Unwittingly, man had assigned to his machines the selective evolution which in the animal changes the nature of its bodily structure through the ages. Man of today, the atomic manipulator, the aeronaut who flies faster than sound, has precisely the same brain and body as his ancestors of twenty thousand years ago who painted the last Ice Age mammoths on the walls of caves in France.

To put it another way, it is man's ideas that have evolved and changed the world about him. Now, confronted by the lethal radiations of open space and the fantastic speeds of his machines, he has to invent new electronic controls that operate faster than his nerves, and he must shield his naked body against atomic radiation by the use of protective metals. Already he is physically antique in this robot world he has created. All that sustains him is that small globe of gray matter through which spin his ever-changing conceptions of the universe.

Yet, as Wallace, almost a hundred years ago, glimpsed this timeless element in man, he uttered one more prophecy. When we come to trace our history into the past, he contended, sooner or later we will come to a time when the body of man begins to differ and diverge more extravagantly in its appearance. Then, he wrote, we shall know that we stand close to the starting point of the human

family. In the twilight before the dawn of the human mind, man will not have been able to protect his body from change and his remains will bear the marks of all the forces that play upon the rest of life. He will be different in his form. He will be, in other words, as variable in body as we know the South African man-apes to be.

Today, with the solution of the Piltdown enigma, we must settle the question of the time involved in human evolution in favor of Wallace, not Darwin; we need not, however, pursue the mystical aspects of Wallace's thought—since other factors yet to be examined may well account for the rise of man. The rapid fading out of archaeological evidence of tools in lower Ice Age times—along with the discovery of man-apes of human aspect but with ape-sized brains, yet possessing a diverse array of bodily characters—suggests that the evolution of the human brain was far more rapid than that conceived of in early Darwinian circles. At that time it was possible to hear the Eskimos spoken of as possible survivals of Miocene men of several million years ago. By contrast to this point of view, man and his rise now appear short in time—explosively short. There is every reason to believe that whatever the nature of the forces involved in the production of the human brain, a long slow competition of human group with human group or race with race would not have resulted in such similar mental potentialities among all peoples everywhere. Something—some other factor—has escaped our scientific attention.

There are certain strange bodily characters which mark man as being more than the product of a dog-eat-dog competition with his fellows. He possesses a peculiar larval nakedness, difficult to explain on survival principles; his periods of helpless infancy and childhood are prolonged; he has aesthetic impulses which, though they vary in intensity from individual to individual, appear in varying manifestations among all peoples. He is totally dependent, in the achievement of human status, upon the careful training he receives in human society.

Unlike a solitary species of animal, he cannot develop alone. He has suffered a major loss of precise instinctive controls of behavior. To make up for this biological lack, society and parents condition the infant, supply his motivations, and promote his long-drawn training at the difficult task of becoming a normal human being. Even today some individuals fail to make this adjustment and have to be excluded from society.

We are now in a position to see the wonder and terror of the human predicament: man is totally dependent on society. Creature of dream, he has created an invisible world of ideas, beliefs, habits, and customs which buttress him about and replace for him the precise instincts of the lower creatures. In this invisible universe he takes refuge, but just as instinct may fail an animal under some shift of environmental conditions, so man's cultural beliefs may prove inadequate to meet a new situation, or, on an individual level, the confused mind may substitute, by some terrible alchemy, cruelty for love.

The profound shock of the leap from animal to human status is echoing still in the depths of our subconscious minds. It is a transition which would seem to have demanded considerable rapidity of adjustment in order for human beings to have survived, and it also involved the growth of prolonged bonds of affection in the sub-human family, because otherwise its naked, helpless offspring would have perished.

It is not beyond the range of possibility that this strange reduction of instincts in man in some manner forced a precipitous brain growth as a compensation—something that had to be hurried for survival purposes. Man's competition, it would thus appear, may have been much less with his own kind than with the dire necessity of building about him a world of ideas to replace his lost animal environment. As we will show later, he is a pedomorph, a creature with an extended childhood.

Modern science would go on to add that many of the characters of man, such as his lack of fur, thin skull, and globular head, suggest mysterious changes in growth rates which preserve, far into human maturity, foetal or infantile characters which hint that the forces creating man drew him fantastically out of the very childhood of his brutal forerunners. Once more the words of Wallace come back to haunt us: "We may safely infer that the savage possesses a brain capable, if cultivated and developed, of performing work of a kind and degree far beyond what he ever requires it to do."

As a modern man, I have sat in concert halls and watched huge audiences floating dazed on the voice of a great singer. Alone in the dark box I have heard far off as if ascending out of some black stairwell the guttural whisperings and bestial coughings out of which that voice arose. Again, I have sat under the slit dome of

a mountain observatory and marveled, as the great wheel of the galaxy turned in all its midnight splendor, that the mind in the course of three centuries has been capable of drawing into its strange, nonspatial interior that world of infinite distance and multitudinous dimensions.

Ironically enough, science, which can show us the flints and the broken skulls of our dead fathers, has yet to explain how we have come so far so fast, nor has it any completely satisfactory answer to the question asked by Wallace long ago. Those who would revile us by pointing to an ape at the foot of our family tree grasp little of the awe with which the modern scientist now puzzles over man's lonely and supreme ascent. As one great student of paleoneurology, Dr. Tilly Edinger, recently remarked, "If man has passed through a Pithecanthropus phase, the evolution of his brain has been unique, not only in its result but also in its tempo. . . . Enlargement of the cerebral hemispheres by 50 per cent seems to have taken place, speaking geologically, within an instant, and without having been accompanied by any major increase in body size."

The true secret of Piltdown, though thought by the public to be merely the revelation of an unscrupulous forgery, lies in the fact that it has forced science to reëxamine carefully the history of the most remarkable creation in the world—the human brain.

Science and the Savages

G. K. CHESTERTON

A PERMANENT DISADVANTAGE of the study of folk-lore and kindred subjects is that the man of science can hardly be in the nature of things very frequently a man of the world. He is a student of nature; he is scarcely ever a student of human nature. And even where this difficulty is overcome, and he is in some sense a student of human nature, this is only a very faint beginning of the painful progress towards being human. For the study of primitive race and religion stands apart in one important respect from all, or nearly all, the ordinary scientific studies. A man can understand astronomy

only by being an astronomer; he can understand entomology only by being an entomologist (or, perhaps, an insect); but he can understand a great deal of anthropology merely by being a man. He is himself the animal which he studies. Hence arises the fact which strikes the eye everywhere in the records of ethnology and folk-lore—the fact that the same frigid and detached spirit which leads to success in the study of astronomy or botany leads to disaster in the study of mythology or human origins. It is necessary to cease to be a man in order to do justice to a microbe; it is not necessary to cease to be a man in order to do justice to men. That same suppression of sympathies, that same waving away of intuitions or guess-work which make a man preternaturally clever in dealing with the stomach of a spider, will make him preternaturally stupid in dealing with the heart of man. He is making himself inhuman in order to understand humanity. An ignorance of the other world is boasted by many men of science; but in this matter their defect arises, not from ignorance of the other world, but from ignorance of this world. For the secrets about which anthropologists concern themselves can be best learnt, not from books or voyages, but from the ordinary commerce of man with man. The secret of why some savage tribe worships monkeys or the moon is not to be found even by travelling among those savages and taking down their answers in a note-book, although the cleverest man may pursue this course. The answer to the riddle is in England; it is in London; nay, it is in his own heart. When a man has discovered why men in Bond Street wear black hats he will at the same moment have discovered why men in Timbuctoo wear red feathers. The mystery in the heart of some savage war-dance should not be studied in books of scientific travel; it should be studied at a subscription ball. If a man desires to find out the origins of religions, let him not go to the Sandwich Islands; let him go to church. If a man wishes to know the origin of human society, to know what society, philosophically speaking, really is, let him not go into the British Museum; let him go into society.

This total misunderstanding of the real nature of ceremonial gives rise to the most awkward and dehumanized versions of the conduct of men in rude lands or ages. The man of science, not realizing that ceremonial is essentially a thing which is done without a reason, has to find a reason for every sort of ceremonial, and, as might be supposed, the reason is generally a very absurd one—

absurd because it originates not in the simple mind of the barbarian, but in the sophisticated mind of the professor. The learned man will say, for instance, "The natives of Mumbojumbo Land believe that the dead man can eat, and will require food upon his journey to the other world. This is attested by the fact that they place food in the grave, and that any family not complying with this rite is the object of the anger of the priests and the tribe." To any one acquainted with humanity this way of talking is topsy-turvy. It is like saying, "The English in the twentieth century believed that a dead man could smell. This is attested by the fact that they always covered his grave with lilies, violets, or other flowers. Some priestly and tribal terrors were evidently attached to the neglect of this action, as we have records of several old ladies who were very much disturbed in mind because their wreaths had not arrived in time for the funeral." It may be of course that savages put food with a dead man because they think that a dead man can eat, or weapons with a dead man because they think that a dead man can fight. But personally I do not believe that they think anything of the kind. I believe they put food or weapons on the dead for the same reason that we put flowers, because it is an exceedingly natural and obvious thing to do. We do not understand, it is true, the emotion which makes us think it obvious and natural; but that is because, like all the important emotions of human existence, it is essentially irrational. We do not understand the savage for the same reason that the savage does not understand himself. And the savage does not understand himself for the same reason that we do not understand ourselves either.

The obvious truth is that the moment any matter has passed through the human mind it is finally and for ever spoilt for all purposes of science. It has become a thing incurably mysterious and infinite; this mortal has put on immortality. Even what we call our material desires are spiritual, because they are human. Science can analyse a pork-chop, and say how much of it is phosphorus and how much is protein; but science cannot analyse any man's wish for a pork-chop, and say how much of it is hunger, how much custom, how much nervous fancy, how much a haunting love of the beautiful. The man's desire for the pork-chop remains literally as mystical and ethereal as his desire for heaven. All attempts, therefore, at a science of any human things, at a science of history, a science of folk-lore, a science of sociology, are by their nature not

merely hopeless, but crazy. You can no more be certain in economic history that a man's desire for money was merely a desire for money than you can be certain in hagiology that a saint's desire for God was merely a desire for God. And this kind of vagueness in the primary phenomena of the study is an absolutely final blow to anything in the nature of a science. Men can construct a science with very few instruments, or with very plain instruments; but no one on earth could construct a science with unreliable instruments. A man might work out the whole of mathematics with a handful of pebbles, but not with a handful of clay which was always falling apart into new fragments, and falling together into new combinations. A man might measure heaven and earth with a reed, but not with a growing reed.

As one of the enormous follies of folk-lore, let us take the case of the transmigration of stories, and the alleged unity of their source. Story after story the scientific mythologists have cut out of its place in history, and pinned side by side with similar stories in their museum of fables. The process is industrious, it is fascinating, and the whole of it rests on one of the plainest fallacies in the world. That a story has been told all over the place at some time or other, not only does not prove that it never really happened; it does not even faintly indicate or make slightly more probable that it never happened. That a large number of fishermen have falsely asserted that they have caught a pike two feet long, does not in the least affect the question of whether any one ever really did so. That numberless journalists announce a Franco-German war merely for money is no evidence one way or the other upon the dark question of whether such a war ever occurred. Doubtless in a few hundred years the innumerable Franco-German wars that did not happen will have cleared the scientific mind of any belief in the legendary war of '70 which did. But that will be because if folk-lore students remain at all, their nature will be unchanged; and their services to folk-lore will be still as they are at present, greater than they know. For in truth these men do something far more godlike than studying legends; they create them.

There are two kinds of stories which the scientists say cannot be true, because everybody tells them. The first class consists of the stories which are told everywhere, because they are somewhat odd or clever; there is nothing in the world to prevent their having

happened to somebody as an adventure any more than there is anything to prevent their having occurred, as they certainly did occur, to somebody as an idea. But they are not likely to have happened to many people. The second class of their "myths" consist of the stories that are told everywhere for the simple reason that they happen everywhere. Of the first class, for instance, we might take such an example as the story of William Tell, now generally ranked among legends upon the sole ground that it is found in the tales of other peoples. Now, it is obvious that this was told everywhere because whether true or fictitious it is what is called "a good story;" it is odd, exciting, and it has a climax. But to suggest that some such eccentric incident can never have happened in the whole history of archery, or that it did not happen to any particular person of whom it is told, is stark impudence. The idea of shooting at a mark attached to some valuable or beloved person is an idea doubtless that might easily have occurred to any inventive poet. But it is also an idea that might easily occur to any boastful archer. It might be one of the fantastic caprices of some story-teller. It might equally well be one of the fantastic caprices of some tyrant. It might occur first in real life and afterwards occur in legends. Or it might just as well occur first in legends and afterwards occur in real life. If no apple has ever been shot off a boy's head from the beginning of the world, it may be done to-morrow morning, and by somebody who has never heard of William Tell.

This type of tale, indeed, may be pretty fairly paralleled with the ordinary anecdote terminating in a repartee or an Irish bull. Such a retort as the famous "Je ne vois pas la nécessité" we have all seen attributed to Talleyrand, to Voltaire, to Henri Quatre, to an anonymous judge, and so on. But this variety does not in any way make it more likely that the thing was never said at all. It is highly likely that it was really said by somebody unknown. It is highly likely that it was really said by Talleyrand. In any case, it is not any more difficult to believe that the *mot* might have occurred to a man in conversation than to a man writing memoirs. It might have occurred to any of the men I have mentioned. But there is this point of distinction about it, that it is not likely to have occurred to all of them. And this is where the first class of so-called myth differs from the second to which I have previously referred. For there is a second class of incident found to be common to the

stories of five or six heroes, say to Sigurd, to Hercules, to Rustem, to the Cid, and so on. And the peculiarity of this myth is that not only is it highly reasonable to imagine that it really happened to one hero, but it is highly reasonable to imagine that it really happened to all of them. Such a story, for instance, is that of a great man having his strength swayed or thwarted by the mysterious weakness of a woman. The anecdotal story, the story of William Tell, is as I have said, popular, because it is peculiar. But this kind of story, the story of Samson and Delilah, of Arthur and Guinevere, is obviously popular because it is not peculiar. It is popular as good, quiet fiction is popular, because it tells the truth about people. If the ruin of Samson by a woman, and the ruin of Hercules by a woman, have a common legendary origin, it is gratifying to know that we can also explain, as a fable, the ruin of Nelson by a woman and the ruin of Parnell by a woman. And, indeed, I have no doubt whatever that, some centuries hence, the students of folk-lore will refuse altogether to believe that Elizabeth Barrett eloped with Robert Browning, and will prove their point up to the hilt by the unquestionable fact that the whole fiction of the period was full of such elopements from end to end.

Possibly the most pathetic of all the delusions of the modern students of primitive belief is the notion they have about the thing they call anthropomorphism. They believe that primitive men attributed phenomena to a god in human form in order to explain them, because his mind in its sullen limitation could not reach any further than his own clownish existence. The thunder was called the voice of a man, the lightning the eyes of a man, because by this explanation they were made more reasonable and comfortable. The final cure for all this kind of philosophy is to walk down a lane at night. Any one who does so will discover very quickly that men pictured something semi-human at the back of all things, not because such a thought was natural, but because it was supernatural; not because it made things more comprehensible, but because it made them a hundred times more incomprehensible and mysterious. For a man walking down a lane at night can see the conspicuous fact that as long as nature keeps to her own course, she has no power with us at all. As long as a tree is a tree, it is a top-heavy monster with a hundred arms, a thousand tongues, and only one leg. But so long as a tree is a tree, it does not frighten us at all. It begins to be something alien, to be something strange, only when

it looks like ourselves. When a tree really looks like a man our knees knock under us. And when the whole universe looks like a man we fall on our faces.

Sentence Maker

HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

THOREAU'S WRITING was to an unusual extent a by-product of his experience. His profession was living, yet, as with all those born to be men of letters, his life seemed incomplete until he had got it described satisfactorily in words. "You . . . have the best of me in my books," he wrote to an admirer in Michigan, Calvin H. Greene, and of course he was right. Therefore, as was natural, he took his writing seriously, and was rich in self-criticism as all writers should be, but are not.

It took him most of the 1840's to get rid of Carlyle's religious-mystical view of literature, which made preachers of the young men of Thoreau's generation. When, in the fifties, his reading swung from literature toward science, he shrugged off this stale generalizing, for there was neither time nor inclination for it. It is only rarely that, after 1850, he writes about a literary masterpiece, for he was no longer studying in that school. Yet it is precisely in this last decade of his life that he makes the shrewdest comments on the art of writing—which is natural, for he had then matured his own. And here he is worth listening to, as is any first-rate writer who tries to analyze his own processes. Not the most philosophic perhaps, but certainly the most valuable, criticism we have is the occasional comment of a good writer on how to write—which means almost invariably how he writes himself.

It was a decade, as we have already seen, of crowded experiences for him with men, women, nature, and the state. There was plenty to write about, so that his *Journal* sometimes has sudden expansions for a day's thought and adventure which must have taken hours to set in order and express. The whole into which he hoped to fit his parts eluded his grasp, but his faith was firm that if he

could reduce his observations to perfect sentences, somehow they would see the light, reach their mark, accomplish their destiny. This optimism has been justified, but only by the labor of many editors, and the enthusiasm of readers searching the trackless Journal for his best.

It was the sentence—a *sententia*—that most occupied his thought. The sentence was his medium—whatever he does and writes about, however often he rewrites or enriches, the fruit of it can be found ripened in a sentence. In the revision of *Walden* for the press, it was doubtful sentences that he threw out, then looked them over, and took back the good ones. They smelled right, as he says, using quaintly his keenest sense as if it could extend itself to words. Naturally he writes best about writing when he is writing about sentences, and these remarks have a biographical value, for they describe as no one else can do the man's mind at work. Only in those deeply impassioned pages about his Sister [the wife of his friend Emerson], so strongly felt as to be scarcely articulate, does he fail to get sentences equal to the emotional intensity or the intellectual insight of his experience. And these, of course, were not meant for publication. With Bacon, Shakespeare, Pope, Doctor Johnson, the makers of the English Bible, and Benjamin Franklin, he belongs among the great makers of the English sentence. Therefore his account of his own practice is interesting.

Two principles, especially, guided him in his writing as, sitting under a pasture oak, he set down his things seen or thought about, or, upstairs in the house on Main Street, worked his notes into his Journal. The first principle might be called intuition made articulate, a favorite idea with all the romantic Transcendentalists [a group of New England writers devoted to a philosophy stressing the importance of the individual]:

APRIL 1. SUNDAY. 1860 . . . The fruit a thinker bears is *sentences*,—statements or opinions. He seeks to affirm something as true. I am surprised that my affirmations or utterances come to me ready-made,—not fore-thought,—so that I occasionally awake in the night simply to let fall ripe a statement which I had never consciously considered before, and as surprising and novel and agreeable to me as anything can be. As if we only thought by sympathy with the universal mind, which thought while we were asleep. There is such a necessity [to] make a definite statement that

our minds at length do it without our consciousness, just as we carry our food to our mouths. This occurred to me last night, but I was so surprised by the fact which I have just endeavored to report that I have entirely forgotten what the particular observation was.

That is the difficulty, of course, with these flashes from a mind in which the heat of long brooding turns to light—if they are not recorded on some sensitive film they are lost and gone, often irrevocably. It was Thoreau's practice to wait for the flash and then anxiously develop the impression until a sentence was made that was true to the original inspiration, yet communicable to the reader. "There is no more Herculean task than to think a thought about this life and then get it expressed." To write that way is dangerous, since the flow of thought is checked while expression is made perfect; yet it is hard not to believe that here is the secret of Thoreau's durability. The rifle is more penetrating than the shotgun; the line is remembered when the poem is forgot.

But these sudden luminosities of thought or irradiations of experience were seldom made articulate at the first trial:

JAN. 26. 1852 . . . Whatever wit has been produced on the spur of the moment will bear to be reconsidered and reformed with phlegm. The arrow had best not be loosely shot. The most transient and passing remark must be . . . made sure and warranted, as if the earth had rested on its axle to back it, and all the natural forces lay behind it. The writer must direct his sentences as carefully and leisurely as the marksman his rifle. . . . If you foresee that a part of your essay will topple down after the lapse of time, throw it down now yourself.

Inspiration pricking him on, he writes several such sentences as these lines describe: "I feel the spur of the moment thrust deep into my side. The present is an inexorable rider." Then, with a shift of theme: "The truest account of heaven is the fairest, and I will accept none which disappoints expectation." Here are other comments:

Nov. 12. 1851 . . . Those sentences are good and well discharged which are like so many little resiliences from the spring floor of our life. . . . Sentences uttered with your back to the wall. . . . Sentences in which there is no strain.

AUG. 22. 1851 . . . It is the fault of some excellent writers—De Quincey's first impressions on seeing London suggest it to me—that they express themselves with too great fullness and detail. They . . . lack moderation and sententiousness. They . . . say all they mean. Their sentences are not concentrated and nutty. Sentences which suggest far more than they say, which have an atmosphere about them, which do not merely report an old, but make a new, impression . . . to frame these, that is the *art* of writing. Sentences which are expensive, towards which so many volumes, so much life, went; which lie like boulders on the page, up and down or across; which contain the seed of other sentences, not mere repetition, but creation; which a man might sell his grounds and castles to build. If De Quincey had suggested each of his pages in a sentence and passed on, it would have been far more excellent writing. His style is nowhere kinked and knotted up into something hard and significant, which you could swallow like a diamond, without digesting.

That last sentence describes the way Thoreau wrote, and the reason for reading him deliberately. To skim his pages, except in parts of *Cape Cod* or in *The Maine Woods* or in some of the *Excursions*, is like walking rapidly down a gallery of fine paintings. Even with every assistance from theme and narrative, as in *Walden*, Thoreau's work reads slowly—which is not always a virtue, but often a fault, like the faults of paradox and exaggeration, of which he accused himself. He favored his best sentences at the expense of his chapters and paragraphs. They contained the most of him.

His second principle of writing was native to a man who put the art of life ahead of the art of literature. It was, to be vital:

SEPT. 2. 1851 . . . We cannot write well or truly but what we write with gusto. The body, the senses, must conspire with the mind. Expression is the act of the whole man, that our speech may be vascular. The intellect is powerless to express thought without the aid of the heart and liver and of every member.

JAN. 30. FRIDAY. 1852 . . . It is in vain to write on chosen themes. We must wait till they have kindled a flame in our minds. There must be the copulating and generating force of love behind every effort destined to be successful. The cold resolve gives birth to, begets, nothing. . . . Obey, report.

JULY 14, 1852. A writer who does not speak out of a full experience uses torpid words, wooden or lifeless words, such words as "humanitary," which have a paralysis in their tails.

And finally, by way of warning, the original of Barrett Wendell's often quoted phrase, "a diarrhoea of words and constipation of thought":

DEC. 31, 1851 . . . The . . . creative moment . . . in the case of some too easy poets . . . becomes mere diarrhoea, mud and clay relaxed. The poet must not have something pass his bowels merely; that is women's poetry. He must have something pass his brain and heart and bowels, too. . . . So he gets delivered.

The rhetorical quality that many feel, even in Thoreau's best writing, is sometimes only a tone and attitude which he sustains, like a good lecturer, through all of such a book as the *Week* or *Walden*. Yet I think that the difficulty which the modern reader finds in what seems to him the stylized writing of *Walden*, or even of the *Excursions*, has a more important source in this habit of the packed and intensely expressive sentence. Our education in science, or its derivatives, has made us more inductive in our mental processes than were our immediate ancestors. We are accustomed to the kind of writing—especially in newspapers and magazines—that assembles facts, which we call news. The packed statement, which is a deduction handed over for our thinking, is unfamiliar and inspires distrust. Our writing escapes the dogmatic by being dilute and often inconclusive. It is easy to abbreviate, as the success of such magazines as *The Reader's Digest* has shown. We write, not by sentences, not even by paragraphs, but in a stream directed at one outlet. The reading of poetry has decreased in proportion to the increase of this homeopathic way of writing, for the effectiveness of poetry is an effectiveness of charged words and lines. If it is not to have high specific gravity, it would be better to write it in prose. Thoreau suffers from this changed habit of reading, since his sentences, with their backs to the wall, and their feet on Mother Earth, differ from poetry in this respect only in a freer rhythm.

Yet there is no intentional obscurity. "I am thinking," he wrote one day, "by what long discipline and at what cost a man learns to speak simply at last." Nor was there any literary affectation in his creed, although it cannot be denied that, like his contemporaries, he let his words strut and crow now and then with the *Walden*

cock. "Why, the roots of *letters*," he says aptly, "are *things*. Natural objects and phenomena are the original symbols or types which express our thoughts and feelings, and yet American scholars, having little or no root in the soil, commonly strive with all their might to confine themselves to the imported symbols alone. All the true growth and experience, the living speech, they would fain reject as 'Americanisms'." "It is a great art in the writer to improve from day to day just that soil and fertility which he has. . . ." "Your mind must not perspire,"—which last, if said of walking out-of-doors, was surely meant for writing indoors also.

The art of writing is much broader and more complex than Thoreau's remarks on sentence-making imply. There is no doubt, however, that his particular art has a survival value much greater than any novelty in his ideas. But, inevitably, it became a perfectionist art, and so a curb upon free writing. Whoever writes by sentences writes slowly, and will often follow his own nose instead of his theme. And being perfectionist, this art made the completion of any whole exceedingly difficult, because each sentence had to be a finished production. He used the spot light instead of the flood. No wonder, then, that, as a student of nature trying to put between the covers of a book an account of that age-old Concord scene in which man had found a new home, Thoreau's work was left half done. Nevertheless, he mopped up his trenches as he crossed them, and left a noble sentence for each significant experience.

SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING

1. Using two or three of the writers in this section, write an essay on the thesis "A writer's style reveals his personality." Make it as imaginative as you can, something on the order of "Lewis Carroll has a great deal of the witch in him, inviting us into his gingerbread house only to fatten us for the oven." Make your portraits extensive, and illustrate with quotations to show your reader what you mean.
2. Sum up Schweitzer's description of the way ethics evolved; then use your summary in support of a thesis about some ethical point suggested by one of the following: the Peace Corps, foreign aid, charity that begins at home, getting tough with Russia, fraternities and sororities, laboratory experiments with living animals, vegetarianism, euthanasia, hunting, giving the job to the man most qual-

ified. You may find an excellent essay in the time you were faced with having to kill, let us say, a mouse, or a fish.

3. Write out a brief explanation of how Piltdown supported Darwin, and of why Darwin hated Wallace's hypothesis. Now, having the thinking straight, and perhaps using Schweitzer's assertion that scientific research has made the mystery of life more mysterious (and perhaps also including Chesterton's thoughts on the same line), write an essay on the subject "My No (or Yes) to Evolution." Your purpose in the exercise is to engage with your own thinking and experience the big questions raised by Schweitzer and Eiseley—to find your own emphatic "No!" or "Yes!" as Darwin did, and then to find persuasive reasons to back it. In other words, bring these big ideas into your own life, and then try them out for size on someone else, that is, on your own hypothetical readers. Somewhere in your essay try to use, as Eiseley does, an experience of your own: "As a modern man, I have sat in concert halls. . . ."

4. If you have any knowledge of experiments in human reactions, as in polls of opinion, or in tests such as the Moulton-McNeil one on page 79, attack or support Chesterton's suggestion that "the same frigid and detached spirit which leads to success in the study of astronomy or botany leads to disaster" in the study of human affairs.

5. Write an essay on some subject like "the tribal taboos of the sophomore prom."

6. Write an essay attacking or developing Chesterton's idea that scientific investigation of things human is impossible because the basic matter, having passed through the human mind, is "incurably mysterious and infinite." Consider what he says about motives, about anthropomorphic belief. You might also consider the apparent difficulty in labeling a word "colloquial" or "standard" (see pp. 44–52). Use what you know of psychology, history, sociology, or literary criticism.

7. Try to write five sentences of the Thoreauvian kind, *sententia* with their roots in natural objects. Sit under an oak and see what sentences your intuition can sprout for you. Write with gusto, the body and senses conspiring. Try something like Thoreau's "The fruit a thinker bears is sentences," or Canby's "The rifle is more penetrating than the shotgun; the line is remembered when the poem is forgot"—sentences that lie like boulders on the page.

8. Write an essay on the following theme: "It is vain to write on chosen themes."

Where I Lived, and What I Lived For

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

A Slight Sound at Evening • E. B. WHITE

THOREAU, THE SENTENCE-SMITH, knew what every good writer knows: that words are like seeds, common and unnoticed, just waiting to be waked up. Thoreau knew how to pun, to turn our common abstractions back into their original metaphors. In his opening passage, playing with the *idea* of buying a farm, playing with the fact that one can possess a thing only in one's consciousness and imagination, we find the imaginative punster at work. *Season* takes on a strong agricultural climate; *survey* means both to look over (its basic meaning inherited from Latin) and to measure for building; *price* means a cost not only financial but spiritual. The dynamics in *deed* you may trace for yourself. Go through Thoreau thoroughly, with a pencil sharpened for a pun. No other writer can teach you so well the figurative potency in common words, and the way to release it with a play of mind and language that is, indeed, a kind of inspired punning.

White, too, is a master of the sentence—see his second sentence, for example—but his gift, again, comes down to words themselves. He learned from Thoreau the best that anyone can learn from him,

the wonder and the simple freedom of being alive in one's own spirit; and he must also have learned something of Thoreau's craft in writing: the potency of individual words. White's pulse is different from Thoreau's, but he has much the same ability to keep his language freshened with metaphor. Both men, you will notice, imply that all language is a metaphor, a kind of perpetual *as if*, expressing the eternal idiom of nature and spirit.

Like Thoreau, White is a playful alluder, slipping in phrases from other writers on the assumption that you are so well read you will recognize and enjoy them. As you read White, mark whatever allusions and echoes you can catch from Thoreau's piece (the second and most famous chapter of *Walden*), not things already marked as quotations, but those appropriated without quotation marks and reapplied in White's own words. (Some of White's allusions are to other chapters, of course, such as his reworking of Thoreau's famous—and ungrammatical—"The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation," or of Thoreau's notion that the man who inherits a barn is stuck with pushing it ahead of him all the way down the road of life.) Mark all distinctive phrases, like *inspirational puffballs* (notice the effect of coupling the abstract Latin adjective with the concrete Anglo-Saxon noun). Mark also White's colloquial and slangy words—*Nature Boy*, *whack*, *show-off*, *ruckus*—and his words from commercial Americana—*vitamin-enriched*, *in-town location*. You may learn something of White's marvelous melodies in chiming the formal with the colloquial, as he keeps himself pleasantly in tune with the reader.

Where I Lived, and What I Lived For

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

AT A CERTAIN SEASON of our life we are accustomed to consider every spot as the possible site of a house. I have thus surveyed the country on every side within a dozen miles of where I live. In imagination I have bought all the farms in succession, for all were to be bought, and I knew their price. I walked over each farmer's premises, tasted his wild apples, discoursed on husbandry with him,

took his farm at his price, at any price, mortgaging it to him in my mind; even put a higher price on it,—took every thing but a deed of it,—took his word for his deed, for I dearly love to talk,—cultivated it, and him too to some extent, I trust, and withdrew when I had enjoyed it long enough, leaving him to carry it on. This experience entitled me to be regarded as a sort of real-estate broker by my friends. Wherever I sat, there I might live, and the landscape radiated from me accordingly. What is a house but a *sedes*, a seat?—better if a country seat. I discovered many a site for a house not likely to be soon improved, which some might have thought too far from the village, but to my eyes the village was too far from it. Well, there I might live, I said; and there I did live, for an hour, a summer and a winter life; saw how I could let the years run off, buffet the winter through, and see the spring come in. The future inhabitants of this region, wherever they may place their houses, may be sure that they have been anticipated. An afternoon sufficed to lay out the land into orchard, woodlot, and pasture, and to decide what fine oaks or pines should be left to stand before the door, and whence each blasted tree could be seen to the best advantage; and then I let it lie, fallow perchance, for a man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone.

My imagination carried me so far that I even had the refusal of several farms,—the refusal was all I wanted,—but I never got my fingers burned by actual possession. The nearest that I came to actual possession was when I bought the Hollowell place, and had begun to sort my seeds, and collected materials with which to make a wheelbarrow to carry it on or off with; but before the owner gave me a deed of it, his wife—every man has such a wife—changed her mind and wished to keep it, and he offered me ten dollars to release him. Now, to speak the truth, I had but ten cents in the world, and it surpassed my arithmetic to tell, if I was that man who had ten cents, or who had a farm, or ten dollars, or all together. However, I let him keep the ten dollars and the farm too, for I had carried it far enough; or rather, to be generous, I sold him the farm for just what I gave for it, and, as he was not a rich man, made him a present of ten dollars, and still had my ten cents, and seeds, and materials for a wheelbarrow left. I found thus that I had been a rich man without any damage to my poverty. But I retained the landscape, and I have since annually carried off what it yielded without a wheelbarrow. With respect to landscapes,—

I am monarch of all I *survey*,
My right there is none to dispute.

I have frequently seen a poet withdraw, having enjoyed the most valuable part of a farm, while the crusty farmer supposed that he had got a few wild apples only. Why, the owner does not know it for many years when a poet has put his farm in rhyme, the most admirable kind of invisible fence, has fairly impounded it, milked it, skimmed it, and got all the cream, and left the farmer only the skimmed milk.

The real attractions of the Hollowell farm, to me, were: its complete retirement, being about two miles from the village, half a mile from the nearest neighbor, and separated from the highway by a broad field; its bounding on the river, which the owner said protected it by its fogs from frosts in the spring, though that was nothing to me; the gray color and ruinous state of the house and barn, and the dilapidated fences, which put such an interval between me and the last occupant; the hollow and lichen-covered apple trees, gnawed by rabbits, showing what kind of neighbors I should have; but above all, the recollection I had of it from my earliest voyages up the river, when the house was concealed behind a dense grove of red maples, through which I heard the house-dog bark. I was in haste to buy it, before the proprietor finished getting out some rocks, cutting down the hollow apple trees, and grubbing up some young birches which had sprung up in the pasture, or, in short, had made any more of his improvements. To enjoy these advantages I was ready to carry it on; like Atlas, to take the world on my shoulders,—I never heard what compensation he received for that,—and do all those things which had no other motive or excuse but that I might pay for it and be unmolested in my possession of it; for I knew all the while that it would yield the most abundant crop of the kind I wanted if I could only afford to let it alone. But it turned out as I have said.

All that I could say, then, with respect to farming on a large scale (I have always cultivated a garden) was, that I had had my seeds ready. Many think that seeds improve with age. I have no doubt that time discriminates between the good and the bad; and when at last I shall plant, I shall be less likely to be disappointed. But I would say to my fellows, once for all, As long as possible live free and uncommitted. It makes but little difference whether you are committed to a farm or the county jail.

Old Cato, whose "*De Re Rusticâ*" is my "Cultivator," says,—and the only translation I have seen makes sheer nonsense of the passage,—“When you think of getting a farm, turn it thus in your mind, not to buy greedily; nor spare your pains to look at it, and do not think it enough to go round it once. The oftener you go there the more it will please you, if it is good.” I think I shall not buy greedily, but go round and round it as long as I live, and be buried in it first, that it may please me the more at last.

The present was my next experiment of this kind, which I purpose to describe more at length, for convenience, putting the experience of two years into one. As I have said, I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up.

When first I took up my abode in the woods, that is, began to spend my nights as well as days there, which, by accident, was on Independence day, or the fourth of July, 1845, my house was not finished for winter, but was merely a defence against the rain, without plastering or chimney, the walls being of rough, weather-stained boards, with wide chinks, which made it cool at night. The upright white hewn studs and freshly planed door and window casings gave it a clean and airy look, especially in the morning, when its timbers were saturated with dew, so that I fancied that by noon some sweet gum would exude from them. To my imagination it retained throughout the day more or less of this auroral character, reminding me of a certain house on a mountain which I had visited the year before. This was an airy and unplastered cabin, fit to entertain a travelling god, and where a goddess might trail her garments. The winds which passed over my dwelling were such as sweep over the ridges of mountains, bearing the broken strains, or celestial parts only, of terrestrial music. The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted; but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of the earth everywhere.

The only house I had been the owner of before, if I except a boat, was a tent, which I used occasionally when making excursions in the summer, and this is still rolled up in my garret; but the boat, after passing from hand to hand, has gone down the stream of time. With this more substantial shelter about me, I had made some progress toward settling in the world. This frame, so slightly clad, was a sort of crystallization around me, and reacted on the

builder. It was suggestive somewhat as a picture in outlines. I did not need to go out-doors to take the air, for the atmosphere within had lost none of its freshness. It was not so much within-doors as behind a door where I sat, even in the rainiest weather. The Harivansa says, "An abode without birds is like a meat without seasoning." Such was not my abode, for I found myself suddenly neighbor to the birds; not by having imprisoned one, but having caged myself near them. I was not only nearer to some of those which commonly frequent the garden and the orchard, but to those wilder and more thrilling songsters of the forest which never, or rarely, serenade a villager,—the wood-thrush, the veery, the scarlet tanager, the field-sparrow, the whippoorwill, and many others.

I was seated by the shore of a small pond, about a mile and a half south of the village of Concord and somewhat higher than it, in the midst of an extensive wood between that town and Lincoln, and about two miles south of that our only field known to fame, Concord Battle Ground; but I was so low in the woods that the opposite shore, half a mile off, like the rest, covered with wood, was my most distant horizon. For the first week, whenever I looked out on the pond it impressed me like a tarn high up on the side of a mountain, its bottom far above the surface of other lakes, and, as the sun arose, I saw it throwing off its nightly clothing of mist, and here and there, by degrees, its soft ripples or its smooth reflecting surface was revealed, while the mists, like ghosts, were stealthily withdrawing in every direction into the woods, as at the breaking up of some nocturnal conventicle. The very dew seemed to hang upon the trees later into the day than usual, as on the sides of mountains.

This small lake was of most value as a neighbor in the intervals of a gentle rain storm in August, when, both air and water being perfectly still, but the sky overcast, mid-afternoon had all the serenity of evening, and the wood-thrush sang around, and was heard from shore to shore. A lake like this is never smoother than at such a time; and the clear portion of the air above it being shallow and darkened by clouds, the water, full of light and reflections, becomes a lower heaven itself so much the more important. From a hill top near by, where the wood had been recently cut off, there was a pleasing vista southward across the pond, through a wide indentation in the hills which form the shore there, where their

opposite sides sloping toward each other suggested a stream flowing out in that direction through a wooded valley, but stream there was none. That way I looked between and over the near green hills to some distant and higher ones in the horizon, tinged with blue. Indeed, by standing on tiptoe I could catch a glimpse of some of the peaks of the still bluer and more distant mountain ranges in the north-west, those true-blue coins from heaven's own mint, and also of some portion of the village. But in other directions, even from this point, I could not see over or beyond the woods which surrounded me. It is well to have some water in your neighborhood, to give buoyancy to and float the earth. One value even of the smallest well is, that when you look into it you see that earth is not continent but insular. This is as important as that it keeps butter cool. When I looked across the pond from this peak toward the Sudbury meadows, which in time of flood I distinguished elevated perhaps by a mirage in their seething valley, like a coin in a basin, all the earth beyond the pond appeared like a thin crust insulated and floated even by this small sheet of intervening water, and I was reminded that this on which I dwelt was but *dry land*.

Though the view from my door was still more contracted, I did not feel crowded or confined in the least. There was pasture enough for my imagination. The low shrub-oak plateau to which the opposite shore arose, stretched away toward the prairies of the West and the steppes of Tartary, affording ample room for all the roving families of men. "There are none happy in the world but beings who enjoy freely a vast horizon,"—said Damodara, when his herds required new and larger pastures.

Both place and time were changed, and I dwelt nearer to those parts of the universe and to those eras in history which had most attracted me. Where I lived was as far off as many a region viewed nightly by astronomers. We are wont to imagine rare and delectable places in some remote and more celestial corner of the system, behind the constellation of Cassiopeia's Chair, far from noise and disturbance. I discovered that my house actually had its site in such a withdrawn, but forever new and unprofaned, part of the universe. If it were worth the while to settle in those parts near to the Pleiades or the Hyades, to Aldebaran or Altair, then I was really there, or at an equal remoteness from the life which I had left behind, dwindled and twinkling with as fine a ray to my near-

est neighbor, and to be seen only in moonless nights by him. Such was that part of creation where I had squatted;—

There was a shepherd that did live,
And held his thoughts as high
As were the mounts whereon his flocks
Did hourly feed him by.

What should we think of the shepherd's life if his flocks always wandered to higher pastures than his thoughts?

Every morning was a cheerful invitation to make my life of equal simplicity, and I may say innocence, with Nature herself. I have been as sincere a worshipper of Aurora as the Greeks. I got up early and bathed in the pond; that was a religious exercise, and one of the best things which I did. They say that characters were engraven on the bathing tub of king Tching-thang to this effect: "Renew thyself completely each day; do it again, and again, and forever again." I can understand that. Morning brings back the heroic ages. I was as much affected by the faint hum of a mosquito making its invisible and unimaginable tour through my apartment at earliest dawn, when I was sitting with door and windows open, as I could be by any trumpet that ever sang of fame. It was Homer's requiem; itself an Iliad and Odyssey in the air, singing its own wrath and wanderings. There was something cosmical about it; a standing advertisement, till forbidden, of the everlasting vigor and fertility of the world. The morning, which is the most memorable season of the day, is the awakening hour. Then there is least somnolence in us; and for an hour, at least, some part of us awakes which slumbers all the rest of the day and night. Little is to be expected of that day, if it can be called a day, to which we are not awakened by our Genius, but by the mechanical nudgings of some servitor, are not awakened by our own newly-acquired force and aspirations from within, accompanied by the undulations of celestial music, instead of factory bells, and a fragrance filling the air—to a higher life than we fell asleep from; and thus the darkness bear its fruit, and prove itself to be good, no less than the light. That man who does not believe that each day contains an earlier, more sacred, and auroral hour than he has yet profaned, has despaired of life, and is pursuing a descending and darkening way. After a partial cessation of his sensuous life, the soul of man, or its organs rather,

are reinvigorated each day, and his Genius tries again what noble life it can make. All memorable events, I should say, transpire in morning time and in a morning atmosphere. The Vedas say, "All intelligences awake with the morning." Poetry and art, and the fairest and most memorable of the actions of men, date from such an hour. All poets and heroes, like Memnon, are the children of Aurora, and emit their music at sunrise. To him whose elastic and vigorous thought keeps pace with the sun, the day is a perpetual morning. It matters not what the clocks say or the attitudes and labors of men. Morning is when I am awake and there is a dawn in me. Moral reform is the effort to throw off sleep. Why is it that men give so poor an account of their day if they have not been slumbering? They are not such poor calculators. If they had not been overcome with drowsiness they would have performed something. The millions are awake enough for physical labor; but only one in a million is awake enough for effective intellectual exertion, only one in a hundred millions to a poetic or divine life. To be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who was quite awake. How could I have looked him in the face?

We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep. I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor. It is something to be able to paint a particular picture, or to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful; but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look, which morally we can do. To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts. Every man is tasked to make his life, even in its details, worthy of the contemplation of his most elevated and critical hour. If we refused, or rather used up, such paltry information as we get, the oracles would distinctly inform us how this might be done.

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practise resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was

not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. For most men, it appears to me, are in a strange uncertainty about it, whether it is of the devil or of God, and have *somewhat hastily* concluded that it is the chief end of man here to "glorify God and enjoy him forever."

Still we live meanly, like ants; though the fable tells us that we were long ago changed into men; like pygmies we fight with cranes; it is error upon error, and clout upon clout, and our best virtue has for its occasion a superfluous and evitable wretchedness. Our life is frittered away by detail. An honest man has hardly need to count more than his ten fingers, or in extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumb nail. In the midst of this chopping sea of civilized life, such are the clouds and storms and quicksands and thousand-and-one items to be allowed for, that a man has to live, if he would not founder and go to the bottom and not make his port at all, by dead reckoning, and he must be a great calculator indeed who succeeds. Simplify, simplify. Instead of three meals a day, if it be necessary eat but one; instead of a hundred dishes, five; and reduce other things in proportion. Our life is like a German Confederacy, made up of petty states, with its boundary forever fluctuating, so that even a German cannot tell you how it is bounded at any moment. The nation itself, with all its so-called internal improvements, which, by the way, are all external and superficial, is just such an unwieldy and overgrown establishment, cluttered with furniture and tripped up by its own traps, ruined by luxury and heedless expense, by want of calculation and a worthy aim, as the million households in the land; and the only cure for it as for them is in a rigid economy, a stern and more than Spartan simplicity of life and elevation of purpose. It lives too fast. Men think that it is essential that the *Nation* have commerce, and export ice, and talk through a telegraph, and ride thirty miles an hour, without a doubt, whether *they* do or not; but whether we should live like baboons or like men, is a little uncertain. If we do not get our sleepers, and forge

rails, and devote days and nights to the work, but go to tinkering upon our *lives* to improve *them*, who will build railroads? And if railroads are not built, how shall we get to heaven in season? But if we stay at home and mind our business, who will want railroads? We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us. Did you ever think what those sleepers are that underlie the railroad? Each one is a man, an Irishman, or a Yankee man. The rails are laid on them, and they are covered with sand, and the cars run smoothly over them. They are sound sleepers, I assure you. And every few years a new lot is laid down and run over; so that, if some have the pleasure of riding on a rail, others have the misfortune to be ridden upon. And when they run over a man that is walking in his sleep, a supernumerary sleeper in the wrong position, and wake him up, they suddenly stop the cars, and make a hue and cry about it, as if this were an exception. I am glad to know that it takes a gang of men for every five miles to keep the sleepers down and level in their beds as it is, for this is a sign that they may sometime get up again.

Why should we live with such hurry and waste of life? We are determined to be starved before we are hungry. Men say that a stitch in time saves nine, and so they take a thousand stitches to-day to save nine tomorrow. As for *work*, we haven't any of any consequence. We have the Saint Vitus' dance, and cannot possibly keep our heads still. If I should only give a few pulls at the parish bell-rope, as for a fire, that is, without setting the bell, there is hardly a man on his farm in the outskirts of Concord, notwithstanding that press of engagements which was his excuse so many times this morning, nor a boy, nor a woman, I might almost say, but would forsake all and follow that sound, not mainly to save property from the flames, but, if we will confess the truth, much more to see it burn, since burn it must, and we, be it known, did not set it on fire,—or to see it put out, and have a hand in it, if that is done as handsomely; yes, even if it were the parish church itself. Hardly a man takes a half hour's nap after dinner, but when he wakes he holds up his head and asks, "What's the news?" as if the rest of mankind had stood his sentinels. Some give directions to be waked every half hour, doubtless for no other purpose; and then, to pay for it, they tell what they have dreamed. After a night's sleep the news is as indispensable as the breakfast. "Pray tell me any thing new that has happened to a man anywhere on this globe,"—and

he reads it over his coffee and rolls, that a man has had his eyes gouged out this morning on the Wachito River; never dreaming the while that he lives in the dark unfathomed mammoth cave of this world, and has but the rudiment of an eye himself.

For my part, I could easily do without the post-office. I think that there are very few important communications made through it. To speak critically, I never received more than one or two letters in my life—I wrote this some years ago—that were worth the postage. The penny-post is, commonly, an institution through which you seriously offer a man that penny for his thoughts which is so often safely offered in jest. And I am sure that I never read any memorable news in a newspaper. If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter,—we never need read of another. One is enough. If you are acquainted with the principle, what do you care for a myriad instances and applications? To a philosopher all *news*, as it is called, is gossip, and they who edit and read it are old women over their tea. Yet not a few are greedy after this gossip. There was such a rush, as I hear, the other day at one of the offices to learn the foreign news by the last arrival, that several large squares of plate glass belonging to the establishment were broken by the pressure,—news which I seriously think a ready wit might write a twelve-month or twelve years beforehand with sufficient accuracy. As for Spain, for instance, if you know how to throw in Don Carlos and the Infanta, and Don Pedro and Seville and Granada, from time to time in the right proportions,—they may have changed the names a little since I saw the papers,—and serve up a bull-fight when other entertainments fail, it will be true to the letter, and give us as good an idea of the exact state or ruin of things in Spain as the most succinct and lucid reports under this head in the newspapers: and as for England, almost the last significant scrap of news from that quarter was the revolution of 1649; and if you have learned the history of her crops for an average year, you never need attend to that thing again, unless your speculations are of a merely pecuniary character. If one may judge who rarely looks into the newspapers, nothing new does ever happen in foreign parts, a French revolution not excepted.

What news! how much more important to know what that is

which was never old! "Kieou-he-yu (great dignitary of the state of Wei) sent a man to Khoung-tseu to know his news. Khoung-tseu caused the messenger to be seated near him, and questioned him in these terms: What is your master doing? The messenger answered with respect: My master desires to diminish the number of his faults, but he cannot come to the end of them. The messenger being gone, the philosopher remarked: What a worthy messenger! What a worthy messenger!" The preacher, instead of vexing the ears of drowsy farmers on their day of rest at the end of the week,—for Sunday is the fit conclusion of an ill-spent week, and not the fresh and brave beginning of a new one,—with this one other draggle-tail of a sermon, should shout with thundering voice,—"Pause! Avast! Why so seeming fast, but deadly slow?"

Shams and delusions are esteemed for soundest truths, while reality is fabulous. If men would steadily observe realities only, and not allow themselves to be deluded, life, to compare it with such things as we know, would be like a fairy tale and the Arabian Nights' Entertainments. If we respected only what is inevitable and has a right to be, music and poetry would resound along the streets. When we are unhurried and wise, we perceive that only great and worthy things have any permanent and absolute existence,—that petty fears and petty pleasures are but the shadow of the reality. This is always exhilarating and sublime. By closing the eyes and slumbering, and consenting to be deceived by shows, men establish and confirm their daily life of routine and habit everywhere, which still is built on purely illusory foundations. Children, who play life, discern its true law and relations more clearly than men, who fail to live it worthily, but who think that they are wiser by experience, that is, by failure. I have read in a Hindoo book, that "there was a king's son, who, being expelled in infancy from his native city, was brought up by a forester, and, growing up to maturity in that state, imagined himself to belong to the barbarous race with which he lived. One of his father's ministers having discovered him, revealed to him what he was, and the misconception of his character was removed, and he knew himself to be a prince. So soul," continues the Hindoo philosopher, "from the circumstances in which it is placed, mistakes its own character, until the truth is revealed to it by some holy teacher, and then it knows itself to be *Brahme*." I perceive that we inhabitants of New England live this mean life that we do because our vision does not penetrate

the surface of things. We think that that *is* which *appears* to be. If a man should walk through this town and see only the reality, where, think you, would the "Mill-dam" go to? If he should give us an account of the realities he beheld there, we should not recognize the place in his description. Look at a meeting-house, or a court-house, or a jail, or a shop, or a dwelling-house, and say what that thing really is before a true gaze, and they would all go to pieces in your account of them. Men esteem truth remote, in the outskirts of the system, behind the farthest star, before Adam and after the last man. In eternity there is indeed something true and sublime. But all these times and places and occasions are now and here. God himself culminates in the present moment, and will never be more divine in the lapse of all the ages. And we are enabled to apprehend at all what is sublime and noble only by the perpetual instilling and drenching of the reality that surrounds us. The universe constantly and obediently answers to our conceptions; whether we travel fast or slow, the track is laid for us. Let us spend our lives in conceiving then. The poet or the artist never yet had so fair and noble a design but some of his posterity at least could accomplish it.

Let us spend one day as deliberately as Nature, and not be thrown off the track by every nutshell and mosquito's wing that falls on the rails. Let us rise early and fast, or break fast, gently and without perturbation; let company come and let company go, let the bells ring and the children cry,—determined to make a day of it. Why should we knock under and go with the stream? Let us not be upset and overwhelmed in that terrible rapid and whirlpool called a dinner, situated in the meridian shallows. Weather this danger and you are safe, for the rest of the way is down hill. With unrelaxed nerves, with morning vigor, sail by it, looking another way, tied to the mast like Ulysses. If the engine whistles, let it whistle till it is hoarse for its pains. If the bell rings, why should we run? We will consider what kind of music they are like. Let us settle ourselves, and work and wedge our feet downward through the mud and slush of opinion, and prejudice, and tradition, and delusion, and appearance, that alluvion which covers the globe, through Paris and London, through New York and Boston and Concord, through church and state, through poetry and philosophy and religion, till we come to a hard bottom and rocks in place, which we can call *reality*, and say, This is, and no mistake;

and then begin, having a *point d'appui*, below freshet and frost and fire, a place where you might found a wall or a state, or set a lamp-post safely, or perhaps a gauge, not a Nilometer, but a Realometer, that future ages might know how deep a freshet of shams and appearances had gathered from time to time. If you stand right fronting and face to face to a fact, you will see the sun glimmer on both its surfaces, as if it were a cimeter, and feel its sweet edge dividing you through the heart and marrow, and so you will happily conclude your mortal career. Be it life or death, we crave only reality. If we are really dying, let us hear the rattle in our throats and feel cold in the extremities; if we are alive, let us go about our business.

Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains. I would drink deeper; fish in the sky, whose bottom is pebbly with stars. I cannot count one. I know not the first letter of the alphabet. I have always been regretting that I was not as wise as the day I was born. The intellect is a cleaver; it discerns and rifts its way into the secret of things. I do not wish to be any more busy with my hands than is necessary. My head is hands and feet. I feel all my best faculties concentrated in it. My instinct tells me that my head is an organ for burrowing, as some creatures use their snout and fore-paws, and with it I would mine and burrow my way through these hills. I think that the richest vein is somewhere hereabouts; so by the divining rod and thin rising vapors I judge; and here I will begin to mine.

A Slight Sound at Evening

E. B. WHITE

IN HIS JOURNAL for July 10–12, 1841, Thoreau wrote: “A slight sound at evening lifts me up by the ears, and makes life seem inexpressibly serene and grand. It may be in Uranus, or it may be in the shutter.” The book into which he later managed to pack both Uranus and the

shutter was published in 1854, and now, a hundred years having gone by, *Walden*, its serenity and grandeur unimpaired, still lifts us up by the ears, still translates for us that language we are in danger of forgetting, "which all things and events speak without metaphor, which alone is copious and standard."

Walden is an oddity in American letters. It may very well be the oddest of our distinguished oddities. For many it is a great deal too odd, and for many it is a particular bore. I have not found it to be a well-liked book among my acquaintances, although usually spoken of with respect, and one literary critic for whom I have the highest regard can find no reason why anyone gives *Walden* a second thought. To admire the book is, in fact, something of an embarrassment, for the mass of men have an indistinct notion that its author was a sort of Nature Boy.

I think it is of some advantage to encounter the book at a period in one's life when the normal anxieties and enthusiasms and rebellions of youth closely resemble those of Thoreau in that spring of 1845 when he borrowed an axe, went out to the woods, and began to whack down some trees for timber. Received at such a juncture, the book is like an invitation to life's dance, assuring the troubled recipient that no matter what befalls him in the way of success or failure he will always be welcome at the party—that the music is played for him, too, if he will but listen and move his feet. In effect, that is what the book is—an invitation, unengraved; and it stirs one as a young girl is stirred by her first big party bid. Many think it a sermon; many set it down as an attempt to rearrange society; some think it an exercise in nature-loving some find it a rather irritating collection of inspirational puffballs by an eccentric show-off. I think it none of these. It still seems to me the best youth's companion yet written by an American, for it carries a solemn warning against the loss of one's valuables, it advances a good argument for traveling light and trying new adventures, it rings with the power of positive adoration, it contains religious feeling without religious images, and it steadfastly refuses to record bad news. Even its pantheistic note is so pure as to be non-corrupting—pure as the flute-note blown across the pond on those faraway summer nights. If our colleges and universities were alert, they would present a cheap pocket edition of the book to every senior upon graduating, along with his sheepskin, or instead of it. Even if some senior were to take it literally and start felling

trees, there could be worse mishaps: the axe is older than the Dictaphone and it is just as well for a young man to see what kind of chips he leaves before listening to the sound of his own voice. And even if some were to get no farther than the table of contents, they would learn how to name eighteen chapters by the use of only thirty-nine words and would see how sweet are the uses of brevity.

If Thoreau had merely left us an account of a man's life in the woods, or if he had simply retreated to the woods and there recorded his complaints about society, or even if he had contrived to include both records in one essay, *Walden* would probably not have lived a hundred years. As things turned out, Thoreau, very likely without knowing quite what he was up to, took man's relation to nature and man's dilemma in society and man's capacity for elevating his spirit and he beat all these matters together, in a wild free interval of self-justification and delight, and produced an original omelette from which people can draw nourishment in a hungry day. *Walden* is one of the first of the vitamin-enriched American dishes. If it were a little less good than it is, or even a little less queer, it would be an abominable book. Even as it is, it will continue to baffle and annoy the literal mind and all those who are unable to stomach its caprices and imbibe its theme. Certainly the plodding economist will continue to have rough going if he hopes to emerge from the book with a clear system of economic thought. Thoreau's assault on the Concord society of the mid-nineteenth century has the quality of a modern Western: he rides into the subject at top speed, shooting in all directions. Many of his shots ricochet and nick him on the rebound, and throughout the melee there is a horrendous cloud of inconsistencies and contradictions, and when the shooting dies down and the air clears, one is impressed chiefly by the courage of the rider and by how splendid it was that somebody should have ridden in there and raised all that ruckus.

When he went to the pond, Thoreau struck an attitude and did so deliberately, but his posturing was not to draw the attention of others to him but rather to draw his own attention more closely to himself. "I learned this at least by my experiment: that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours." The sentence has the power to resuscitate the youth drowning in his sea of doubt. I recall my

exhilaration upon reading it, many years ago, in a time of hesitation and despair. It restored me to health. And now in 1954 when I salute Henry Thoreau on the hundredth birthday of his book, I am merely paying off an old score—or an installment on it.

In his journal for May 3-4, 1838—Boston to Portland—he wrote: “Midnight—head over the boat’s side—between sleeping and waking—with glimpses of one or more lights in the vicinity of Cape Ann. Bright moonlight—the effect heightened by seasickness.” The entry illuminates the man, as the moon the sea on that night in May. In Thoreau the natural scene was heightened, not depressed, by a disturbance of the stomach, and nausea met its match at last. There was a steadiness in at least one passenger if there was none in the boat. Such steadiness (which in some would be called intoxication) is at the heart of *Walden*—confidence, faith, the discipline of looking always at what is to be seen, undeviating gratitude for the life-everlasting that he found growing in his front yard. “There is nowhere recorded a simple and irrepressible satisfaction with the gift of life, any memorable praise of God.” He worked to correct that deficiency. *Walden* is his acknowledgment of the gift of life. It is the testament of a man in a high state of indignation because (it seemed to him) so few ears heard the uninterrupted poem of creation, the morning wind that forever blows. If the man sometimes wrote as though all his readers were male, unmarried, and well-connected, it is because he gave his testimony during the callow years, and, for that matter, never really grew up. To reject the book because of the immaturity of the author and the bugs in the logic is to throw away a bottle of good wine because it contains bits of the cork.

Thoreau said he required of every writer, first and last, a simple and sincere account of his own life. Having delivered himself of this chesty dictum, he proceeded to ignore it. In his books and even in his enormous journal, he withheld or disguised most of the facts from which an understanding of his life could be drawn. *Walden*, subtitled “Life in the Woods,” is not a simple and sincere account of a man’s life, either in or out of the woods; it is an account of a man’s journey into the mind, a toot on the trumpet to alert the neighbors. Thoreau was well aware that no one can alert his neighbors who is not wide awake himself, and he went to the woods (among other reasons) to make sure that he would stay awake during his broadcast. What actually took place during the years

1845-47 is largely unrecorded, and the reader is excluded from the private life of the author, who supplies almost no gossip about himself, a great deal about his neighbors and about the universe.

As for me, I cannot in this short ramble give a simple and sincere account of my own life, but I think Thoreau might find it instructive to know that this memorial essay is being written in a house that, through no intent on my part, is the same size and shape as his own domicile on the pond—about ten by fifteen, tight, plainly finished, and at a little distance from my Concord. The house in which I sit this morning was built to accommodate a boat, not a man, but by long experience I have learned that in most respects it shelters me better than the larger dwelling where my bed is, and which, by design, is a manhouse not a boathouse. Here in the boathouse I am a wilder and, it would appear, a healthier man, by a safe margin. I have a chair, a bench, a table, and I can walk into the water if I tire of the land. My house fronts a cove. Two fishermen have just arrived to spot fish from the air—an osprey and a man in a small yellow plane who works for the fish company. The man, I have noticed, is less well equipped than the hawk, who can dive directly on his fish and carry it away, without telephoning. A mouse and a squirrel share the house with me. The building is, in fact, a multiple dwelling, a semidetached affair. It is because I am semidetached while here that I find it possible to transact this private business with the fewest obstacles.

There is also a woodchuck here, living forty feet away under the wharf. When the wind is right, he can smell my house; and when the wind is contrary, I can smell his. We both use the wharf for sunning, taking turns, each adjusting his schedule to the other's convenience. Thoreau once ate a woodchuck. I think he felt he owed it to his readers, and that it was little enough, considering the indignities they were suffering at his hands and the dressing-down they were taking. (Parts of *Walden* are pure scold.) Or perhaps he ate the woodchuck because he believed every man should acquire strict business habits, and the woodchuck was destroying his market beans. I do not know. Thoreau had a strong experimental streak in him. It is probably no harder to eat a woodchuck than to construct a sentence that lasts a hundred years. At any rate, Thoreau is the only writer I know who prepared himself for his great ordeal by eating a woodchuck; also the only one who got a

hangover from drinking too much water. (He was drunk the whole time, though he seldom touched wine or coffee or tea.)

Here in this compact house where I would spend one day as deliberately as Nature if I were not being pressed by *The Yale Review*, and with a woodchuck (as yet uneaten) for neighbor, I can feel the companionship of the occupant of the pondside cabin in Walden woods, a mile from the village, near the Fitchburg right of way. Even my immediate business is no barrier between us: Thoreau occasionally batted out a magazine piece, but was always suspicious of any sort of purposeful work that cut into his time. A man, he said, should take care not to be thrown off the track by every nutshell and mosquito's wing that falls on the rails.

There has been much guessing as to why he went to the pond. To set it down to escapism is, of course, to misconstrue what happened. Henry went forth to battle when he took to the woods, and *Walden* is the report of a man torn by two powerful and opposing drives—the desire to enjoy the world (and not be derailed by a mosquito wing) and the urge to set the world straight. One cannot join these two successfully, but sometimes, in rare cases, something good or even great results from the attempt of the tormented spirit to reconcile them. Henry went forth to battle, and if he set the stage himself, if he fought on his own terms and with his own weapons, it was because it was his nature to do things differently from most men, and to act in a cocky fashion. If the pond and the woods seemed a more plausible site for a house than an in-town location, it was because a cowbell made for him a sweeter sound than a churchbell. *Walden*, the book, makes the sound of the cowbell, more than a churchbell, and proves the point, although both sounds are in it, and both remarkably clear and sweet. He simply preferred his churchbell at a little distance.

I think one reason he went to the woods was a perfectly simple and commonplace one—and apparently he thought so, too. "At a certain season of our life," he wrote, "we are accustomed to consider every spot as the possible site of a house." There spoke the young man, a few years out of college, who had not yet broken away from home. He hadn't married, and he had found no job that measured up to his rigid standards of employment, and like any young man, or young animal, he felt uneasy and on the defensive until he had fixed himself a den. Most young men, of course, cast-

ing about for a site, are content merely to draw apart from their kinfolks. Thoreau, convinced that the greater part of what his neighbors called good was bad, withdrew from a great deal more than family: he pulled out of everything for a while, to serve everybody right for being so stuffy, and to try his own prejudices on the dog.

The house-hunting sentence above, which starts the Chapter called "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For," is followed by another passage that is worth quoting here because it so beautifully illustrates the offbeat prose that Thoreau was master of, a prose at once strictly disciplined and wildly abandoned. "I have surveyed the country on every side within a dozen miles of where I live," continued this delirious young man. "In imagination I have bought all the farms in succession, for all were to be bought, and I knew their price. I walked over each farmer's premises, tasted his wild apples, discoursed on husbandry with him, took his farm at his price, at any price, mortgaging it to him in my mind; even put a higher price on it—took everything but a deed of it—took his word for his deed, for I dearly love to talk—cultivated it, and him too to some extent, I trust, and withdrew when I had enjoyed it long enough, leaving him to carry it on." A copydesk man would get a double hernia trying to clean up that sentence for the management, but the sentence needs no fixing, for it perfectly captures the meaning of the writer and the quality of the ramble.

"Wherever I sat, there might live, and the landscape radiated from me accordingly." Thoreau, the home-seeker, sitting on his hummock with the entire State of Massachusetts radiating from him, is to me the most humorous of the New England figures, and *Walden* the most humorous of the books, though its humor is almost continuously subsurface and there is nothing funny anywhere, except a few weak jokes and bad puns that rise to the surface like a perch in the pond that rose to the sound of the maestro's flute. Thoreau tended to write in sentences, a feat not every writer is capable of, and *Walden* is, rhetorically speaking, a collection of certified sentences, some of them, it would now appear, as indestructible as they are errant. The book is distilled from the vast journals, and this accounts for its intensity: he picked out bright particles that pleased his eye, whirled them in the kaleidoscope of his content, and produced the pattern that has endured—the color, the form, the light.

On this its hundredth birthday, Thoreau's *Walden* is pertinent and timely. In our uneasy season, when all men unconsciously seek a retreat from a world that has got almost completely out of hand, his house in the Concord woods is a haven. In our culture of gadgetry and the multiplicity of convenience, his cry "Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity!" has the insistence of a fire alarm. In the brooding atmosphere of war and the gathering radioactive storm, the innocence and serenity of his summer afternoons are enough to burst the remembering heart, and one gazes back upon that pleasing interlude—its confidence, its purity, its deliberateness—with awe and wonder, as one would look upon the face of a child asleep.

"This small lake was of most value as a neighbor in the intervals of a gentle rain-storm in August, when, both air and water being perfectly still, but the sky overcast, midafternoon had all the serenity of evening, and the wood-thrush sang around, and was heard from shore to shore." Now, in the perpetual overcast in which our days are spent, we hear with extra perception and deep gratitude that song, tying century to century.

I sometimes amuse myself by bringing Henry Thoreau back to life and showing him the sights. I escort him into a phone booth and let him dial Weather. "This is a delicious evening," the girl's voice says, "when the whole body is one sense, and imbibes delight through every pore." I show him the spot in the Pacific where an island used to be, before some magician made it vanish. "We know not where we are," I murmur. "The light which puts out our eyes is darkness to us. Only that day dawns to which we are awake." I thumb through the latest copy of *Vogue* with him. "Of two patterns which differ only by a few threads more or less of a particular color," I read, "the one will be sold readily, the other lie on the shelf, though it frequently happens that, after the lapse of a season, the latter becomes the most fashionable." Together we go outboarding on the Assabet, looking for what we've lost—a hound, a bay horse, a turtledove. I show him a distracted farmer who is trying to repair a hay baler before the thunder shower breaks. "This farmer," I remark, "is endeavoring to solve the problem of a livelihood by a formula more complicated than the problem itself. To get his shoe strings he speculates in herds of cattle."

I take the celebrated author to Twenty-One for lunch, so the waiters may study his shoes. The proprietor welcomes us. "The gross feeder," remarks the proprietor, sweeping the room with his arm,

"is a man in the larva stage." After lunch we visit a classroom in one of those schools conducted by big corporations to teach their superannuated executives how to retire from business without serious injury to their health. (The shock to men's systems these days when relieved of the exacting routine of amassing wealth is very great and must be cushioned.) "It is not necessary," says the teacher to his pupils, "that a man should earn his living by the sweat of his brow, unless he sweats easier than I do. We are determined to be starved before we are hungry."

I turn on the radio and let Thoreau hear Winchell beat the red hand around the clock. "Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in," shouts Mr. Winchell, rattling his telegraph key. "Hardly a man takes a half hour's nap after dinner, but when he wakes he holds up his head and asks, 'What's the news?' If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter—we need never read of another. One is enough."

I doubt that Thoreau would be thrown off balance by the fantastic sights and sounds of the twentieth century. "The Concord nights," he once wrote, "are stranger than the Arabian nights." A four-engined air liner would merely serve to confirm his early views on travel. Everywhere he would observe, in new shapes and sizes, the old predicaments and follies of men—the desperation, the impedimenta, the meanness—along with the visible capacity for elevation of the mind and soul. "This curious world which we inhabit is more wonderful than it is convenient; more beautiful than it is useful; it is more to be admired and enjoyed than used." He would see that today ten thousand engineers are busy making sure that the world shall be convenient if they bust doing it, and others are determined to increase its usefulness even though its beauty is lost somewhere along the way.

At any rate, I'd like to stroll about the countryside in Thoreau's company for a day, observing the modern scene, inspecting today's snowstorm, pointing out the sights, and offering belated apologies for my sins. Thoreau is unique among writers in that those who admire him find him uncomfortable to live with—a regular hairshirt of a man. A little band of dedicated Thoreauvians would be a sorry sight indeed: fellows who hate compromise and have compromised, fellows who love wildness and have lived tamely, and at their side,

censuring them and chiding them, the ghostly figure of this upright man, who long ago gave corroboration to impulses they perceived were right and issued warnings against the things they instinctively knew to be their enemies. I should hate to be called a Thoreauvian, yet I wince every time I walk into the barn I'm pushing before me, seventy-five feet by forty, and the author of *Walden* has served as my conscience through the long stretches of my trivial days.

Hairshirt or no, he is a better companion than most, and I would not swap him for a soberer or more reasonable friend even if I could. I can reread his famous invitation with undiminished excitement. The sad thing is that not more acceptances have been received, that so many decline for one reason or another, pleading some previous engagement or ill health. But the invitation stands. It will beckon as long as this remarkable book stays in print—which will be as long as there are August afternoons in the intervals of a gentle rainstorm, as long as there are ears to catch the faint sounds of the orchestra. I find it agreeable to sit here this morning, in a house of correct proportions, and hear across a century of time his flute, his frogs, and his seductive summons to the wildest revels of them all.

SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING

1. Write five or six sentences, each containing a pun that awakens a sleeping metaphor, as Thoreau does with "spur of the moment" (see Canby, p. 143). Try something like "The apple of Jones's eye seemed a little overripe," or "And there she planted her feet: you could almost see them take root."
2. To familiarize yourself with figurative writing, take several of Thoreau's figures of speech and analyze each one according to the three principal levels of figurative subtlety: the simile, the metaphor, the implied metaphor. The *simile* makes its figurative comparison openly, using *like*, *as*, or *as if*:

She was *like* a cow.

She walked *as* a cow walks.

She chewed *as if* she were some thoughtful cow.

The *metaphor* exaggerates further by pretending that "She is a cow." (In other words, drop the *like* from a simile and you have a metaphor.) The *implied metaphor* hints at the pretended identity

without naming it, implying "cow" by using only a cowlike attribute or two: "She chewed her cud thoughtfully."

Now, pick up one of your selections from Thoreau's figures of speech, put it in whichever of the three levels it belongs to, and fill in the other two levels, rephrasing the figure to suit them. For instance, the following figure of Thoreau's is an implied metaphor: "a poet has put his farm in rhyme, . . . milked it, skimmed it, and got all the cream." Now, what would the figure be, stated plainly as a simile and as a metaphor? Your answer would look like this:

SIMILE: The farm is like a cow.

METAPHOR: The farm is the cow.

IMPLIED METAPHOR: (Thoreau) "a poet . . . milked it, skimmed it, and got all the cream."

Here is another example, with Thoreau giving the metaphor, and leaving you the simile and implied metaphor to make:

SIMILE: The distant mountain ranges are like coins.

METAPHOR: (Thoreau) "distant mountain ranges . . . , those true-blue coins from heaven's own mint."

IMPLIED METAPHOR: The distant mountain ranges seemed fresh and newly minted.

3. Write five phrases that mix formal and informal diction, as in the following of White's: "the immaturity of the author and the *bugs* in the logic"; "so beautifully illustrates the *offbeat* prose"; "It was his nature to do things differently from most men, and to act in a *cocky* fashion"; "perfectly captures the meaning of the writer and the quality of the *ramble*."

4. Write an essay illustrating from your own experience one of Thoreau's assertions: "A man is rich in proportion to the number of things he can afford to let alone"; "To be awake is to be alive"; "Let us spend one day as deliberately as Nature" (this last might be a wonderful opening for humor, the shoes full of water, the sandwiches full of ants).

5. Illustrate from your own experience, and with references and allusions to Thoreau, the Thoreauvian satisfaction in building a tree house, spending the night in the woods, planting a watermelon

patch, turning a boathouse (just the size of Thoreau's cabin) into a studio for rumination, or knowing a woodchuck (as yet uneaten).

6. Write about some book that has changed the direction of your life.

7. Try a passage in parody or imitation of Thoreau. Now try one imitating White, attempting to catch a prose that can echo Shakespeare's "Sweet are the uses of adversity," that can add an egg-beater and a Western, that can follow a *plodding economist* with a *rough going*, and that still can pay a hairshirt of a man a praise so high it almost bursts the remembering heart.

The Autobiographical Essay

Shooting an Elephant • GEORGE ORWELL

THIS IS A CLASSIC EXAMPLE of personal anecdote used to illustrate a general expository point—imperialism is evil—a thesis that might have been developed at length in a conventional essay, with illustrations from history and testimony from other observers. As you read, notice how Orwell's language keeps the picture before your eyes, and how, when his impressions grow vivid, he moves into metaphor to tell you more clearly how it was—"as neatly as one skins a rabbit." Ask yourself what the difference in force is between the simile and the metaphor, between "like a huge rock toppling" and "grandmotherly air." Notice also how Orwell's stringent honesty about his feelings enforces his thesis, that which he knows to be right.

Shooting an Elephant

GEORGE ORWELL

IN MOULMEIN, in Lower Burma, I was hated by large numbers of people—the only time in my life that I have been important enough for this to happen to me. I was sub-divisional police officer of the town, and in an aimless, petty kind of way anti-European feeling was very bitter. No one had the guts to raise a riot, but if a European woman went through the bazaars alone somebody would probably spit betel juice over her dress. As a police officer I was an obvious target and was baited whenever it seemed safe to do so. When a nimble Burman tripped me up on the football field and the referee (another Burman) looked the other way, the crowd yelled with hideous laughter. This happened more than once. In the end the sneering yellow faces of young men that met me everywhere, the insults hooted after me when I was at a safe distance, got badly on my nerves. The young Buddhist priests were the worst of all. There were several thousands of them in the town and none of them seemed to have anything to do except stand on street corners and jeer at Europeans.

All this was perplexing and upsetting. For at that time I had already made up my mind that imperialism was an evil thing and the sooner I chucked up my job and got out of it the better. Theoretically—and secretly, of course—I was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British. As for the job I was doing, I hated it more bitterly than I can perhaps make clear. In a job like that you see the dirty work of Empire at close quarters. The wretched prisoners huddling in the stinking cages of the lock-ups, the grey, cowed faces of the long-term convicts, the scarred buttocks of the men who had been flogged with bamboos—all these oppressed me with an intolerable sense of guilt. But I could get nothing into perspective. I was young and ill-educated and I had had to think out my problems in the utter silence that is imposed on every Englishman in the East. I did not even know that

the British Empire is dying, still less did I know that it is a great deal better than the younger empires that are going to supplant it. All I knew was that I was stuck between my hatred of the empire I served and my rage against the evil-spirited little beasts who tried to make my job impossible. With one part of my mind I thought of the British Raj as an unbreakable tyranny, as something clamped down, in *saecula saeculorum*, upon the will of prostrate peoples; with another part I thought that the greatest joy in the world would be to drive a bayonet into a Buddhist priest's guts. Feelings like these are the normal by-products of imperialism; ask any Anglo-Indian official, if you can catch him off duty.

One day something happened which in a roundabout way was enlightening. It was a tiny incident in itself, but it gave me a better glimpse than I had had before of the real nature of imperialism—the real motives for which despotic governments act. Early one morning the sub-inspector at a police station the other end of the town rang me up on the 'phone and said that an elephant was ravaging the bazaar. Would I please come and do something about it? I did not know what I could do, but I wanted to see what was happening and I got on to a pony and started out. I took my rifle, an old .44 Winchester and much too small to kill an elephant, but I thought the noise might be useful *in terrorem*. Various Burmans stopped me on the way and told me about the elephant's doings. It was not, of course, a wild elephant, but a tame one which had gone "must." It had been chained up, as tame elephants always are when their attack of "must" is due, but on the previous night it had broken its chain and escaped. Its mahout, the only person who could manage it when it was in that state, had set out in pursuit, but had taken the wrong direction and was now twelve hours' journey away, and in the morning the elephant had suddenly reappeared in the town. The Burmese population had no weapons and were quite helpless against it. It had already destroyed somebody's bamboo hut, killed a cow and raided some fruit-stalls and devoured the stock; also it had met the municipal rubbish van and, when the driver jumped out and took to his heels, had turned the van over and inflicted violences upon it.

The Burmese sub-inspector and some Indian constables were waiting for me in the quarter where the elephant had been seen. It was a very poor quarter, a labyrinth of squalid bamboo huts, thatched with palm-leaf, winding all over a steep hillside. I re-

member that it was a cloudy, stuffy morning at the beginning of the rains. We began questioning the people as to where the elephant had gone and, as usual, failed to get any definite information. That is invariably the case in the East; a story always sounds clear enough at a distance, but the nearer you get to the scene of events the vaguer it becomes. Some of the people said that the elephant had gone in one direction, some said that he had gone in another, some professed not even to have heard of any elephant. I had almost made up my mind that the whole story was a pack of lies, when we heard yells a little distance away. There was a loud, scandalized cry of "Go away, child! Go away this instant!" and an old woman with a switch in her hand came round the corner of a hut, violently shooing away a crowd of naked children. Some more women followed, clicking their tongues and exclaiming; evidently there was something that the children ought not to have seen. I rounded the hut and saw a man's dead body sprawling in the mud. He was an Indian, a black Dravidian coolie, almost naked, and he could not have been dead many minutes. The people said that the elephant had come suddenly upon him round the corner of the hut, caught him with its trunk, put its foot on his back and ground him into the earth. This was the rainy season and the ground was soft, and his face had scored a trench a foot deep and a couple of yards long. He was lying on his belly with arms crucified and head sharply twisted to one side. His face was coated with mud, the eyes wide open, the teeth bared and grinning with an expression of unendurable agony. (Never tell me, by the way, that the dead look peaceful. Most of the corpses I have seen looked devilish.) The friction of the great beast's foot had stripped the skin from his back as neatly as one skins a rabbit. As soon as I saw the dead man I sent an orderly to a friend's house nearby to borrow an elephant rifle. I had already sent back the pony, not wanting it to go mad with fright and throw me if it smelt the elephant.

The orderly came back in a few minutes with a rifle and five cartridges, and meanwhile some Burmans had arrived and told us that the elephant was in the paddy fields below, only a few hundred yards away. As I started forward practically the whole population of the quarter flocked out of the houses and followed me. They had seen the rifle and were all shouting excitedly that I was going to shoot the elephant. They had not shown much interest in the elephant when he was merely ravaging their homes,

but it was different now that he was going to be shot. It was a bit of fun to them, as it would be to an English crowd; besides they wanted the meat. It made me vaguely uneasy. I had no intention of shooting the elephant—I had merely sent for the rifle to defend myself if necessary—and it is always unnerving to have a crowd following you. I marched down the hill, looking and feeling a fool, with the rifle over my shoulder and an ever-growing army of people jostling at my heels. At the bottom, when you got away from the huts, there was a metalled road and beyond that a miry waste of paddy fields a thousand yards across, not yet ploughed but soggy from the first rains and dotted with coarse grass. The elephant was standing eight yards from the road, his left side towards us. He took not the slightest notice of the crowd's approach. He was tearing up bunches of grass, beating them against his knees to clean them and stuffing them into his mouth.

I had halted on the road. As soon as I saw the elephant I knew with perfect certainty that I ought not to shoot him. It is a serious matter to shoot a working elephant—it is comparable to destroying a huge and costly piece of machinery—and obviously one ought not to do it if it can possibly be avoided. And at that distance, peacefully eating, the elephant looked no more dangerous than a cow. I thought then and I think now that his attack of "must" was already passing off; in which case he would merely wander harmlessly about until the mahout came back and caught him. Moreover, I did not in the least want to shoot him. I decided that I would watch him for a little while to make sure that he did not turn savage again, and then go home.

But at that moment I glanced round at the crowd that had followed me. It was an immense crowd, two thousand at the least and growing every minute. It blocked the road for a long distance on either side. I looked at the sea of yellow faces above the garish clothes—faces all happy and excited over this bit of fun, all certain that the elephant was going to be shot. They were watching me as they would watch a conjurer about to perform a trick. They did not like me, but with the magical rifle in my hands I was momentarily worth watching. And suddenly I realized that I should have to shoot the elephant after all. The people expected it of me and I had got to do it; I could feel their two thousand wills pressing me forward, irresistibly. And it was at this moment, as I stood there with the rifle in my hands, that I first grasped the hol-

lowness, the futility of the white man's dominion in the East. Here was I, the white man with his gun, standing in front of the unarmed native crowd—seemingly the leading actor of the piece; but in reality I was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of those yellow faces behind. I perceived in this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys. He becomes a sort of hollow, posing dummy, the conventionalized figure of a sahib. For it is the condition of his rule that he shall spend his life in trying to impress the “natives,” and so in every crisis he has got to do what the “natives” expect of him. He wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it. I had got to shoot the elephant. I had committed myself to doing it when I sent for the rifle. A sahib has got to act like a sahib; he has got to appear resolute, to know his own mind and do definite things. To come all that way, rifle in hand, with two thousand people marching at my heels, and then to trail feebly away, having done nothing—no, that was impossible. The crowd would laugh at me. And my whole life, every white man's life in the East, was one long struggle not to be laughed at.

But I did not want to shoot the elephant. I watched him beating his bunch of grass against his knees, with that preoccupied grandmotherly air that elephants have. It seemed to me that it would be murder to shoot him. At that age I was not squeamish about killing animals, but I had never shot an elephant and never wanted to. (Somehow it always seems worse to kill a *large* animal.) Besides, there was the beast's owner to be considered. Alive, the elephant was worth at least a hundred pounds; dead, he would only be worth the value of his tusks, five pounds, possibly. But I had got to act quickly. I turned to some experienced-looking Burmans who had been there when we arrived, and asked them how the elephant had been behaving. They all said the same thing: he took no notice of you if you left him alone, but he might charge if you went too close to him.

It was perfectly clear to me what I ought to do. I ought to walk up to within, say, twenty-five yards of the elephant and test his behavior. If he charged, I could shoot; if he took no notice of me, it would be safe to leave him until the mahout came back. But also I knew that I was going to do no such thing. I was a poor shot with a rifle and the ground was soft mud into which one would sink at every step. If the elephant charged and I missed him, I

should have about as much chance as a toad under a steamroller. But even then I was not thinking particularly of my own skin, only of the watchful yellow faces behind. For at that moment, with the crowd watching me, I was not afraid in the ordinary sense, as I would have been if I had been alone. A white man mustn't be frightened in front of "natives"; and so, in general, he isn't frightened. The sole thought in my mind was that if anything went wrong those two thousand Burmans would see me pursued, caught, trampled on and reduced to a grinning corpse like that Indian up the hill. And if that happened it was quite probable that some of them would laugh. That would never do. There was only one alternative. I shoved the cartridges into the magazine and lay down on the road to get a better aim.

The crowd grew very still, and a deep, low, happy sigh, as of people who see the theatre curtain go up at last, breathed from innumerable throats. They were going to have their bit of fun after all. The rifle was a beautiful German thing with cross-hair sights. I did not then know that in shooting an elephant one would shoot to cut an imaginary bar running from ear-hole to ear-hole. I ought therefore, as the elephant was sideways on, to have aimed straight at his ear-hole; actually I aimed several inches in front of this, thinking the brain would be further forward.

When I pulled the trigger I did not hear the bang or feel the kick—one never does when a shot goes home—but I heard the devilish roar of glee that went up from the crowd. In that instant, in too short a time, one would have thought, even for the bullet to get there, a mysterious, terrible change had come over the elephant. He neither stirred nor fell, but every line of his body had altered. He looked suddenly stricken, shrunken, immensely old, as though the frightful impact of the bullet had paralysed him without knocking him down. At last, after what seemed a long time—it might have been five seconds, I dare say—he sagged flabbily to his knees. His mouth slobbered. An enormous senility seemed to have settled upon him. One could have imagined him thousands of years old. I fired again into the same spot. At the second shot he did not collapse but climbed with desperate slowness to his feet and stood weakly upright, with legs sagging and head drooping. I fired a third time. That was the shot that did for him. You could see the agony of it jolt his whole body and knock the last remnant of strength from his legs. But in falling he seemed

for a moment to rise, for as his hind legs collapsed beneath him he seemed to tower upwards like a huge rock toppling, his trunk reaching skywards like a tree. He trumpeted, for the first and only time. And then down he came, his belly towards me, with a crash that seemed to shake the ground even where I lay.

I got up. The Burmans were already racing past me across the mud. It was obvious that the elephant would never rise again, but he was not dead. He was breathing very rhythmically with long rattling gasps, his great mound of a side painfully rising and falling. His mouth was wide open—I could see far down into caverns of pale pink throat. I waited a long time for him to die, but his breathing did not weaken. Finally I fired my two remaining shots into the spot where I thought his heart must be. The thick blood welled out of him like red velvet, but still he did not die. His body did not even jerk when the shots hit him, the tortured breathing continued without a pause. He was dying, very slowly and in great agony, but in some world remote from me where not even a bullet could damage him further. I felt that I had got to put an end to that dreadful noise. It seemed dreadful to see the great beast lying there, powerless to move and yet powerless to die, and not even to be able to finish him. I sent back for my small rifle and poured shot after shot into his heart and down his throat. They seemed to make no impression. The tortured gasps continued as steadily as the ticking of a clock.

In the end I could not stand it any longer and went away. I heard later that it took him half an hour to die. Burmans were bringing dahs and baskets even before I left, and I was told they had stripped his body almost to the bones by the afternoon.

Afterwards, of course, there were endless discussions about the shooting of the elephant. The owner was furious, but he was only an Indian and could do nothing. Besides, legally I had done the right thing, for a mad elephant has to be killed, like a mad dog, if its owner fails to control it. Among the Europeans opinion was divided. The older men said I was right, the younger men said it was a damn shame to shoot an elephant for killing a coolie, because an elephant was worth more than any damn Coringhee coolie. And afterwards I was very glad that the coolie had been killed; it put me legally in the right and it gave me a sufficient pretext for shooting the elephant. I often wondered whether any of the others grasped that I had done it solely to avoid looking a fool.

SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING

Find an experience that once taught you some general truth about man and the universe, or one in which you now can see some such significance, though it seemed unimportant at the time. Very few students have shot an elephant, but perhaps you were in an automobile accident, or stole your best friend's storybook doll, or broke a promise. The incident may be small; the lesson may be obvious. The point is that in this incident you learned the lesson for the first time, first realized that the abstract truths actually operate in daily scrapes and quibbles. Your aim in doing the exercise is to make your readers, through vivid and figurative detail after detail, see and feel exactly how it was. To keep yourself within the expository traces, write out a clear thesis—"One day something happened that taught me the real nature of robbery: that you really steal more from yourself than from others"—and then set it clearly at the end of a good beginning paragraph, or at least after a reasonable introduction that sets the scene and lets the reader know where he is going.

9 /

The Horrors of Exposition

An Experimental Investigation • LOIS Z. SMITH

Get-Out-if-You-Can! • AMERICAN TRADITIONS PROJECT

YOUR SUBJECT may so strongly dictate your style that what comes out bears no trace of human intervention. Or you may so far intrude upon your subject that all is false and folksy. One way is too impersonal; the other, too personal. And both obscure your message.

The first essay in this section does about as creditable a job as one can expect from the slender inch of knowledge its elaborate rigging produces, and from a tradition encouraging the utmost in wordiness and repetition. The writing could have been much weaker. I have, in fact, chosen both of these essays for their strengths as well as their weaknesses, to exercise us in the rigors of writing. As you read the first essay (which I have already abridged for convenience), ask yourself how, given such subject matter, you might have used simpler phrases and further condensed the entire report.

The second essay tries, unworthily, to sell a worthy subject.

This is, of course, an advertisement. As you go, underline words and phrases that seem to show the author thinking a little too well of himself, and not well enough of his subject or his audience.

*An Experimental Investigation of
Young Children's Interest and
Expressive Behavior Responses to
Single Statement, Verbal Repetition,
and Ideational Repetition of
Content in Animal Stories*

LOIS Z. SMITH

THE AIM OF THIS STUDY was to develop an experimental technique for measuring and comparing the interest and expressive behavior responses which two-, three-, and four-year-old children give to single statement, verbal repetition, and ideational repetition of content in animal stories.

The study involved (1) the writing of stories containing these three elements, (2) the training of observers and the establishing of reliability in the use of the observer's blanks, and (3) conducting the experimental story groups.

The subjects used in the establishing of the reliability of the observers were 14 four- and five-year-old children who were attending the preschool laboratories of the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station. The subjects of the experimental story groups were 33 two-, and three-, and four-year-old children. The average chronological age of the group used for establishing the reliability of the observers was 42.5 months with a standard deviation of 7.21, the

average mental age 50.0 months with a standard deviation of 8.87. The average chronological age of 27 children in the main experimental group given the Stanford revision of the Binet scale was 50.9 months with a standard deviation of 6.25, and an average mental age of 59.3 with a standard deviation of 9.96. The 6 children given the Kuhlmann revision of the Binet scale had an average chronological age of 36 months with a standard deviation of 2.52 and an average mental age of 43.2 with a standard deviation of 5.46.

PREPARATION OF THE STORIES

The stories for the experiment were written so that they would contain certain general characteristics recommended by educators and writers of young children's stories. The following were used as guiding principles in the construction of the stories:

1. A single incident told in chronological sequence was to be used as a plot.
2. The story must be within the child's experience.
3. The vocabulary must be understandable to children.
4. The units whether words, phrases, or sentences must be simple.
5. Young children are fond of animal stories in which the animals talk and act like people.

An incident was borrowed from a story for older children. It supplied the necessary chronological sequence of events within the experience of the young child. The story *Two Little Geese* was taken from a story called *Mrs. Goose's Rubbers*. The story was about a goose who had lost her rubbers and the sequence of events consisted of her attempt to find them. Some parts of the original story were incorporated in the experimental story while other parts were re-written. . . .

As a guide in choosing a vocabulary for the stories which children of these ages would understand, all of the words of each story were listed and their occurrence in children's vocabularies checked. The studies of Bateman, Beyer, Brandenburg, Bush, and Gale and Gale were used. . . . Only those words which occurred in five or more of the vocabularies were used.

In order to make the story simple, short declarative sentences

were used as often as possible. The average number of words in the sentences used in the stories was six.

The stories were written in 3 forms. Form A was told in single statements. The 2 similar characters were treated as a unit by means of a plural or compound subject. For example:

"Mr. Goose and Mrs. Goose had lost their rubbers.
They said, 'We must have them to go down town'."

Form B was told with a verbal repetition of content. In this form each of 2 animal characters responded individually. The words used to describe the behavior of the first character were repeated in describing the behavior of the second except that the pronouns were varied in sex and number to agree with their respective antecedents and the verbs were changed in form to agree in number with their respective subjects. For example:

"Mr. Goose had lost his rubbers.
He said, 'I must have them to go down town.'
Mrs. Goose had lost her rubbers.
She said, 'I must have them to go down town'."

In Form C the stories were characterized by ideational repetition. Each one of the two similar characters responded individually. The first character acted and spoke. The same words were used to describe this action as those used in Form A and in Form B in the repeated statements about both characters. In describing the behavior of the second character in Form C the idea is repeated but the words are different. For example:

"Mr. Goose had lost his rubbers.
He said, 'I must have them to go down town.'
Mrs. Goose's rubbers were lost. 'I cannot go to the store without them,' she said."

From observation of story groups in the preschool laboratories it was decided that a story requiring three minutes would come well within the period during which even the youngest child could give attention to the story. The reading of Form A required 1½ minutes, and Form B and Form C each required 3 minutes. The stories were written in one-half minute units so that each item of expressive behavior or interest could be checked on the basis of occurrence within half minutes. Each unit of a story was typed in

the story book on the space between two leaves so that turning a page indicated to the observers the end of a half minute unit.

Three comparable stories were written for the experiment, one for use as a trial story in establishing reliability; the others for use in the experiment proper. The story *Two Little Geese* is reported on pages 188-89.

TRAINING OF THE STORY-TELLER

The story-teller made special preparation for the telling of the stories in order that the telling would be as uniform as possible. Each form of each story was memorized. A careful study was made of the enunciation, pronunciation, expression, and voice used in telling the stories. The story was timed so that the story-teller always took the same amount of time in telling it. Persons trained in telling children's stories criticized the story-teller's presentation of the story. A small story book which lay on the lap of the story-teller served as a guide and aided in maintaining uniformity.

The personality of the story-teller as manifested by dramatic pause, voice quality, inflection, and facial expression was evidenced only enough to insure the children's interest and was made uniform for all forms of stories.

At the end of the experiment the story-teller asked the observers to report on her uniformity in manner and time of presentation of the stories. . . .

TRAINING THE OBSERVERS AND ESTABLISHING THE RELIABILITY OF THE OBSERVER'S BLANK

Following the preparation of the stories, the next problem was the development of a technique for recording the interest and expressive behavior of the children in the story situations. The observer's blank as used in this study lists 5 types of expressive behavior (1) laughs, (2) smiles, (3) claps hands, nods approval, etc. (4) annoyed, (5) neutral; and 3 types of interest (1) watches, (2) any combination of watching or not watching, (3) does not watch.

TWO LITTLE GEESE

FORM A

Mr. and Mrs. Goose could not find their red rubbers.

"We need them to go down town," they said. They had peeked into every corner of the little dark closet under the stairs.

Their red rubbers were not there.

Mr. and Mrs. Goose looked under the bed.

They opened the ice box and looked into it.

Their red rubbers were lost.

Mr. and Mrs. Goose rolled up the rug and looked under it.

They saw no red rubbers. They heard the rain drops hitting the roof of their house.

They put on their coats and hats.

They picked up their baskets and very green umbrellas.

They went out the door.

Mr. and Mrs. Goose closed the door.

They opened their big green umbrellas.

Plop! Four big somethings fell on their heads nearly knocking their hats off.

Mr. and Mrs. Goose looked to see what had dropped.

There were their red rubbers.

They put on their red rubbers.

They walked in the water on their way down town.

FORM B

Mr. Goose could not find his red rubbers.

"I need them to go down town," he said.

Mrs. Goose could not find her red rubbers.

"I need them to go down town," she said.

Mr. Goose peeked into every corner of the little dark closet under the stairs.

His red rubbers were not there.

Mrs. Goose peeked into every corner of the little dark closet under the stairs.

Her red rubbers were not there.

Mr. Goose looked under the bed.

Mrs. Goose looked under the bed.

Mr. Goose opened the ice box and looked into it. His red rubbers were lost.

Mrs. Goose opened the ice box and looked into it.

Her red rubbers were lost.

Mr. Goose rolled up the rug and looked under it. He saw no red rubbers.

Mrs. Goose rolled up the rug and looked under it. She saw no red rubbers.

Mr. Goose heard the rain drops hitting the roof of the house.

Mrs. Goose heard the rain drops hitting the roof of the house.

FORM C

Mr. Goose could not find his red rubbers.

He said, "I need them to go down town."

Mrs. Goose's rubbers were lost.

She said, "I cannot go to the store without them."

Mr. Goose peeked into every corner of the little dark closet under the stairs.

His red rubbers were not there.

From top to bottom of the dark closet Mrs. Goose looked for her red rubbers. She did not find them.

Mr. Goose looked under the bed.

Down under the bed Mrs. Goose crawled to look.

Mr. Goose opened the ice box and looked into it. His red rubbers were lost.

Mrs. Goose could not find her rubbers in the ice box. They were gone.

Mr. Goose rolled up the rug and looked under it. He saw no red rubbers.

Mrs. Goose's red rubbers were not under the rug. She lifted it to look.

Mr. Goose heard the rain drops hitting the roof of his house.

The rain was falling on the top of the house. Mrs. Goose listened.

TWO LITTLE GEESE—*Concluded*

FORM A

FORM B

FORM C

Mr. Goose put on his coat and hat.

Mrs. Goose put on her coat and hat.

Mr. Goose picked up his basket and green umbrella.

Mrs. Goose picked up her basket and green umbrella.

Mr. Goose went out on the porch.

Mr. Goose closed the door.

Mrs. Goose went out on the porch.

Mrs. Goose closed the door.

Mr. Goose opened his big green umbrella.

Plop! Two big somethings fell on his head.

They nearly knocked his hat off.

Mrs. Goose opened her big green umbrella.

Plop! Two big somethings fell on her head.

They nearly knocked her hat off.

Mr. Goose looked to see what had dropped.

There were his little red rubbers.

Mrs. Goose looked to see what had dropped.

There were her little red rubbers.

Mr. Goose put on his red rubbers.

He walked through the water on his way down town.

Mrs. Goose put on her red rubbers.

She walked through the water on her way down town.

Mr. Goose put on his coat and hat.

Mrs. Goose had her wraps on.

Mr. Goose picked up his basket and green umbrella.

Mrs. Goose was carrying her basket and green umbrella.

Mr. Goose went out on the porch.

Mr. Goose closed the door.

Mrs. Goose shut the door behind her.

Mr. Goose opened his big green umbrella.

Plop! Two big somethings fell on his head. They nearly knocked his hat off.

Mrs. Goose put up her umbrella.

Out of it dropped something that put her bonnet over one of her eyes.

Mr. Goose looked to see what had dropped.

There were his little red rubbers.

Mrs. Goose saw that her two little red rubbers had fallen out of her umbrella.

Mr. Goose put on his red rubbers.

He walked in the water on his way down town.

With her red rubbers on her little feet, Mrs.

Goose went through the rain to the store.

The experimenter in weighing the observations of expressive behavior assumed that greater amounts of expressiveness in enjoyment or disapproval of the story should be given the higher positive or negative scores while less expressiveness should be given scores falling between the extremes. Thus the scale of expressive behavior ranges from -1 to 3 and 1 as the midpoint for neutral expressiveness.

<i>Expressive Behavior Items</i>	<i>Score</i>
1. Laughs—the child's amusement is expressed by a chuckle, giggle, or snort.	3
2. Smiles—the child's mouth is drawn up into a smile.	3
3. Claps hands, or nods approval.	3
4. Annoyed—the child scowls or watches the door.	2
5. There is an absence of 1, 2, 3, and 4. The child has a neutral expression.	1

A scale for interest values was chosen which ranged from 0 to 2. The score of 1 served as a midpoint from which differences were judged. The following are definitions of interest items:

<i>Interest Items</i>	<i>Score</i>
1. Watches—the child's eyes are focused on the story-teller all of the time except possibly for a glance.	2
2. Any variation between 1 and 3.	1
3. Does not watch—his eyes are focused on other things—not on the story-teller except for a possible glance.	0

All three of the observers were college graduates and two were graduate students with special training in child psychology. Twelve hours during a period of two weeks were spent in training the observers for the experiment. This period of training was characterized by the experimenter's telling of stories to groups of children and the observers checking on the observation blank the behavior responses of the same 2 children. Disagreements were noted and discussed. Definitions were agreed upon and examples of the types of behavior cited. This procedure was repeated until the number of disagreements became so few as to indicate that the observers were sufficiently trained.

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EXPERIMENTAL STORY GROUPS

The next problem of the study was the division of the two-, three-, and four-year-old children into story groups. Since it was hoped that the influence arising from the individual reactions of the children would be similar for all the groups, the 6 groups were made fairly comparable on the basis of mental age and extroversion-introversion ratings. Thirty-three children served as subjects.

One story was presented to each of the experimental story groups previous to the experiment. This was done for the training of the observers and for the purpose of permitting the children to become accustomed to the experimental story group situation. The story, *Two Little Kittens*, was used for establishing reliability, and the stories *Two Little Dogs* and *Two Little Geese* were used in the experiment proper.

The experimental story groups were conducted each week over a period of 6 weeks. The order was arranged so that 3 of the groups received the *Two Little Geese* story first and 3 of the groups the *Two Little Dogs* story first. The forms of each story were presented in 3 different orders so that the influence of position in the series was equalized for each form. . . .

The first time the child was taken for a story group, the teacher in charge of the preschool group said, "Mrs. . . . would like to tell you a story." The experimenter said nothing to the children, merely waited for them at the door. The 6 children were brought into the testing room and seated in little chairs grouped around the storyteller. The 3 observers sat facing the children in positions closest to the children whom they were to observe. The storyteller began by saying, "I am Mrs. . . . I am going to tell you a story about (giving the name of the story)." She started a stop-watch which she had in the pocket of her smock at the instant she began the story. At the completion of the reading material she had between the pages of the small green-covered story book on her lap, she turned the page. This movement was a signal to the observers that a half minute had elapsed. At the close of the story, the stop-watch was stopped. The experimenter said, "That is all. Perhaps some other day I shall tell you another story." The length of time used in telling the story was recorded and the children were taken back to play.

ANALYSIS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

The interest and expressive behavior scores and the means, standard deviations, and coefficients of variation of the score from Forms A, B, and C of the *Two Little Geese* story and of the *Two Little Dogs* story are shown. . . .

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Another table gives the means and standard deviations of the interest scores and the expressive behavior scores from Forms A and B, Forms A and C, Forms B and C, arranged for comparison of the different forms of the *Two Little Dogs* story. . . .

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the present study was to develop an experimental technique for measuring and comparing the interest and expressive behavior responses which two-, three-, and four-year-old children derive from single statement, verbal repetition, and ideational repetition of content in animal stories. The solution of the problems arising in the study required 3 procedures; the first of which was the writing of 3 stories containing single statement, verbal repetition, and ideational repetition of content; second, the training of observers and establishing of reliability on the use of the observer's blank; third, the conducting of the experimental story groups.

The 3 observers were trained and their reliability was established on the use of an observer's blank.

The subjects of the investigation were 33 children who were enrolled in the preschool laboratories of the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station. These subjects were arranged in 6 comparable groups to which the forms of the stories were presented in 3 different orders. The specific findings of this study are:

1. The observation and observer's blank used in this experiment are a reliable technique for the measurement and comparison of the interest and expressive behavior responses of two-, three- and

four-year-old children to single statement, verbal repetition, and ideational repetition of content in animal stories. This is revealed by the correlation of $.96 \pm .011$ which is the average of 6 correlations between scores made by the 3 observers on the same children.

2. The coefficients of variability of the interest and expressive behavior scores from all forms of the *Two Little Dogs* story were slightly higher than those from the corresponding forms of the *Two Little Geese* story.

3. The significant differences between the interest of the 33 children in Form A, Form B, and Form C of the *Two Little Dogs* story as shown by the means of their scores seemed to indicate that Forms B, with verbal repetition of content, was more interesting than either Form A with single statement or Form C with ideational repetition of content. The significant differences between the means of scores for expressive behavior showed a significantly greater response to Form B, characterized by verbal repetition of content, than to Form A or Form C.

4. There appeared to be no relationship between chronological age and the children's interest and expressive behavior responses to Form A and Form B. However, there was a positive relationship between Form C, characterized by ideational repetition of content, and chronological age. This meant that the older children were more interested and showed greater expressive responses to Form C of the stories than did the younger children.

5. Although the mental age of the 33 children showed no relationship to the expressive behavior scores made on Form A and Form B of the story, there was a positive relationship between the children's expressive behavior scores from Form C of the story and mental age. This relationship indicated that the mentally older children tended to give the more expressive responses to Form C which was characterized by ideational repetition of content than did the younger children.

6. A partial correlation between expressive behavior scores from Form C and mental age with chronological age held constant approached significance while a correlation between expressive behavior scores from Form C and chronological age with mental age held constant did not approach significance. These correlations indicate that the expressive behavior arising from the ideational repetition in Form C may have been related to those factors peculiar to mental age, and not to those factors peculiar to chronological age.

7. Correlations of the interest scores from the different forms of the *Two Little Dogs* story showed a positive relationship between only Form A, single statement, and Form C, ideational repetition of content. This showed that those children who were interested in stories which were characterized by single statement also tended to be interested in stories which were characterized by ideational repetition of content.

8. Correlations revealed no relationship between the expressive behavior responses on these 3 forms of the stories, single statement, verbal repetition, and ideational repetition of content.

9. There was no relationship between extroversion rating and the children's interest and expressive behavior responses to the forms of the story.

Get-Out-if-You-Can!

AMERICAN TRADITIONS PROJECT

IT WAS ONLY an ordinary street light, but the enchanted people of the dark slum gazed upon it with joy and wonderment, for they had put it there . . .

But that was later. The town and its people had been there a long time.

A town really *is* its people.

The people had rolling, rhythmic names . . . like Juan, Diego, Fernando. Some of their ancestors, illustriously stealing a march on the Pilgrims, had found Mexico and founded California. And their poetic names bedeck landmarks throughout the State.

But the town was a rathole. It wasn't really a town, only an isolated ghetto section on the east side of a central California city, rat-ridden, disease-prone, captured by dirt and poverty. Its residents—the modern inheritors of the rhythmic names—had a sardonic name for their community. They called it *Sal-Si-Puedes!* Which means "Get-Out-If-You-Can!"

In the lovelier sections of the city, some had an explanation for this. They were apt to sigh and regret that Mexican-Americans

"just didn't care how they lived." As one leading citizen said: "Give those people a thousand dollars and they would still live like that."

But Fred Ross was convinced that nobody could actually enjoy living in a slum. The tall, scholarly director of the California Federation for Civic Unity couldn't give anyone a thousand dollars—not on his modest subsidy from the American Friends Service Committee. Nevertheless, like a good neighbor, he came calling on the folks in Get-Out-If-You-Can! And he brought something much more important than money—an active faith in the American tradition.

His was not a quick or easy way. Alone at first, fighting against fear, distrust, apathy, Fred Ross trudged along the pitiful rows of shabby houses and lean-tos, talking, talking, talking . . .

"Take a look. Rats running through your yards and homes. Unpaved roads. Dangerously poor sewage disposal. A garbage situation that's unbelievable. Why?"

A young lumber worker at last provided an opening for the answer Ross was bursting to give. "Once," the lumber worker recalled, "I took a bunch of petitions down to the Courthouse for paved streets, street lights, gas, storm drains, all that stuff. They didn't take it seriously."

Ross pounced. "I also went to the Courthouse. I counted the Spanish names on the voters' registration list. Sixteen hundred of a possible 21,000. Do you know that in America the government governs only with the consent—and desires—of the governed? Suppose we all got busy and registered three or four times that many to vote? Suppose—?"

It didn't happen all at once. But soon Ross found himself the catalyst that activated a Catholic priest, a Mexican-American nurse, two laborers and others. There was a memorable mass meeting, resulting in formation of the non-profit, non-partisan Community Service Organization. Its goal—to get out the vote, develop a civic identity and purpose, to form a community in the American tradition.

Sociologists had politely complicated names for the problems of *Sal-Si-Puedes*—depressed income, cultural lags, lingual barriers, inter-cultural tensions, social apathy, inter-group hostility and lots more.

The self-help pioneers of the CSO in *Sal-Si-Puedes* pitched in with a small vocabulary and a whale of a lot of enthusiasm. In

ten weeks, working evenings, spending 3,000 man-hours, wondering, hoping, they registered 4,000 voters to put little, lost *Sal-Si-Puedes* on the political map at City Hall and the Courthouse.

The magic of getting results didn't happen all at once. But it started even during the door-to-door voters registration drive. Ditchdiggers ended perennial flood hazards by repairing Silver Creek, and factory refuse dumping in the creek was forbidden. Paving crews made miles of muddy roads passable. Playgrounds sprouted on shabby sand lots. Traffic control signs appeared. Newspapers began to report happenings in *Sal-Si-Peudes*; and its leaders were invited to join the PTA, to speak before clubs across the tracks.

Then one day, providing assurance for the women who had to be out after dark, cutting the mortality rate for children crossing the street, pushing back the grim shadows of a century, the first street light came.

And the enchanted people of the dark slum gazed upon it with joy and wonderment, for they had put it there.

SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING

1. So that you may learn about, and clear your own prose of, that worst of modern expository horrors—the preference for modifying nouns with nouns instead of adjectives—change the title and opening paragraph of the first selection into as oppressive a noun-noun passage as possible, as follows: “An Experiment Investigation of Young Children Interest and Expression Behavior. . . .”

2. Rewrite the title and first three paragraphs of the first selection, eliminating unnecessary words and pointless distinctions. What is the difference, for instance, between an *experimental investigation* and an *experiment*? Does the writer need to distinguish between *interest* and *responses* (does she really do so in the experiment)? What is the difference between *content in animal stories* and *animal stories*? Underline every *of* in the passage, and then try to eliminate as many as possible by rephrasing. Eliminate the passive voice (notice the omnipresent *used*) by substituting *I*. For example, change “the subjects used in the establishing of” to “I established.”

3. In clean and simple prose (about 500 words), describe the experiment and the findings reported in the first selection.
4. Write an essay analyzing the difficulties of pinning down the evidence in experiments, like Miss Smith's, that deal with human emotions or with language. You might like to look again at Moulton-McNeil, Chesterton, and the discussion of *Webster III*. The following excerpt from William K. Wimsatt's *Philosophic Words* (New Haven, 1948, p. 24) may be helpful:

It is beyond the scope of an analysis of style to *prove* that any qualities of style *exist* in writing. A writing cannot be proved to have more or less meaning than is understood on reading it. Where a certain quality is recognized as a part of style, statistics may give a numerical ratio between the frequency of the quality in one writing and that in another. But the process of making statistics is one of gathering items under a head, and only according to a definition may the items be gathered. Only by the definition have they any relevance. It is the formulating of the definition, not the counting after that, which is the work of studying style.*

When a critic is conscious of quality X in a writing, no accumulation of statistics will increase his consciousness of it. But if he simply announces that the writing has X, he may be challenged. If he says that it has X because he has found X in fifteen examples of fifteen hundred words each, he is less likely to be challenged; if he adds that the average is a hundred occurrences in each example, even less likely. This, however, is not proof, but something more like persuasion, for logically the whole matter rests on the definition with which he began, and statistical details are taken, no less than a blanket statement, on faith.

* Professor L. A. Sherman counted the number of words per sentence for the *whole* of Macaulay's *History of England* and found that the average was 23.43. "Here, then, in this 23.43," he wrote, "was the resultant of the forces which had made Macaulay's literary character" ("On Certain Facts and Principles in the Development of Form in Literature," *The University Studies of the University of Nebraska*, 1 [No. 4, 1892], 350-3). Such, and only such, can be the conclusion reached by counting items chosen without reference to meaning. Cf. Abraham Wolf, *Textbook of Logic* (London, 1930), pp. 231, 236.

5. In a burlesque of ponderous scholarship, write the worst essay you can contrive, with everything noun-to-noun, everything passively voiced and wordy. Choose some subject like "An Experiment-type Woman Student Investigation Study of Pencil, Pen, and Pen-and-Pencil Tapping in a Control Situation of the Fourth Table of the Second Study Hall of the Library of the College."

6. After you have decided exactly where the overpersonal and emotional language falsifies "Get-Out-if-You-Can!," write a sober, honest essay on the same subject, with the same data. (The faults are largely the opposite of those in the first selection, but notice *factory refuse dumping*, noun-noun-noun.)

10 /

The Ironic Essay

A Modest Proposal • JONATHAN SWIFT

NOTHING TEACHES the connotations of words more surely than trying to write irony—because in irony some words say the opposite of what they mean and some say exactly what they mean. You will study Swift to see how this ironic blending of straight and veiled statement works, and then you will try some of this verbal sleight of hand yourself.

One kind of irony, of course, has little to do with words: circumstance, and fate, will seem ironic when the opposite of what should happen happens. The best man goes down; the hero slips on a banana peel; the weather bureau's picnic is soaked in rain. Swift's essay contains some circumstantial irony—motherhood keeps the mother from the work that feeds her children—but the essay depends largely on verbal irony: most of the words say the opposite of Swift's true message. To bring home the abominations in eighteenth-century Ireland, Swift, pretending to be a man of logical but weirdly limited mind, makes a most immodest proposal.

Notice how well Swift's pretended essayist follows the tactics of argument, admitting the arguments of the opposition only to demolish them. As you read, ask yourself these questions: (1) What is the pretended essayist like? (2) What facts are stated straight? (3) What would Swift's proposal be if not presented ironically?

*A Modest Proposal for Preventing
the Children of Ireland from Being
a Burden to Their Parents or Country*

JONATHAN SWIFT

IT IS A MELANCHOLY OBJECT to those who walk through this great town [Dublin], or travel in the country, when they see the streets, the roads, and cabin-doors, crowded with beggars of the female sex, followed by three, four, or six children, all in rags, and importuning every passenger for an alms. These mothers, instead of being able to work for their honest livelihood, are forced to employ all their time in strolling to beg sustenance for their helpless infants; who, as they grow up, either turn thieves for want of work, or leave their dear native country to fight for the Pretender in Spain, or sell themselves to the Barbadoes.

I think it is agreed by all parties, that this prodigious number of children in the arms, or on the backs, or at the heels of their mothers, and frequently of their fathers, is, in the present deplorable state of the kingdom, a very great additional grievance; and, therefore, whoever could find out a fair, cheap, and easy method of making these children sound, useful members of the commonwealth, would deserve so well of the public, as to have his statue set up for a preserver of the nation.

But my intention is very far from being confined to provide only for the children of professed beggars; it is of a much greater extent, and shall take in the whole number of infants at a certain age, who are born of parents in effect as little able to support them, as those who demand our charity in the streets.

As to my own part, having turned my thoughts for many years upon this important subject, and maturely weighed the several schemes of our projectors, I have always found them grossly mis-

taken in their computation. It is true, a child, just dropped from its dam, may be supported by her milk for a solar year, with little other nourishment; at most, not above the value of two shillings, which the mother may certainly get, or the value in scraps, by her lawful occupation of begging; and it is exactly at one year old that I proposed to provide for them in such a manner, as, instead of being a charge upon their parents, or the parish, or wanting food and raiment for the rest of their lives, they shall, on the contrary, contribute to the feeding and partly to the clothing, of many thousands.

There is likewise another great advantage in my scheme, that it will prevent those voluntary abortions, and that horrid practice of women murdering their bastard children, alas, too frequent among us! sacrificing the poor innocent babes, I doubt more to avoid the expense than the shame, which would move tears and pity in the most savage and inhuman breast.

The number of souls in this kingdom being usually reckoned one million and a half, of these I calculate there may be about two hundred thousand couple whose wives are breeders; from which number I subtract thirty thousand couple, who are able to maintain their own children, (although I apprehend there cannot be so many, under the present distresses of the kingdom;) but this being granted, there will remain a hundred and seventy thousand breeders. I again subtract fifty thousand, for those women who miscarry, or whose children die by accident or disease within the year. There only remain a hundred and twenty thousand children of poor parents annually born. The question therefore is, How this number shall be reared and provided for? which, as I have already said, under the present situation of affairs, is utterly impossible by all the methods hitherto proposed. For we can neither employ them in handicraft or agriculture; we neither build houses (I mean in the country,) nor cultivate land: they can very seldom pick up a livelihood by stealing, till they arrive at six years old, except where they are of towardly parts; although I confess they learn the rudiments much earlier; during which time they can, however, be properly looked upon only as probationers; as I have been informed by a principal gentleman in the county of Cavan, who protested to me, that he never knew above one or two instances under the age of six, even in a part of the kingdom so renowned for the quickest proficiency in that art.

I have reckoned, upon a medium, that a child just born will

weigh twelve pounds, and in a solar year, if tolerably nursed, will increase to twenty-eight pounds.

I grant this food will be somewhat dear, and therefore very proper for landlords, who, as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have the best title to the children.

Infants' flesh will be in season throughout the year, but more plentifully in March, and a little before and after: for we are told by a grave author, an eminent French physician, that fish being a prolific diet, there are more children born in Roman Catholic countries about nine months after Lent, than at any other season; therefore, reckoning a year after Lent, the markets will be more glutted than usual, because the number of Popish infants is at least three to one in this kingdom; and therefore it will have one other collateral advantage, by lessening the number of Papists among us.

I have already computed the charge of nursing a beggar's child (in which list I reckon all cottagers, labourers, and four-fifths of the farmers) to be about two shillings per annum, rags included; and I believe no gentleman would repine to give ten shillings for the carcass of a good fat child, which, as I have said, will make four dishes of excellent nutritive meat, when he has only some particular friend, or his own family, to dine with him. Thus the squire will learn to be a good landlord, and grow popular among his tenants; the mother will have eight shillings net profit, and be fit for work till she produces another child.

Those who are more thrifty (as I must confess the times require) may flay the carcass; the skin of which, artificially dressed, will make admirable gloves for ladies, and summer-boots for fine gentlemen.

I am assured by our merchants, that a boy or a girl before twelve years old is no saleable commodity; and even when they come to this age they will not yield above three pounds, or three pounds and half-a-crown at most, on the exchange; which cannot turn to account either to the parents or kingdom, the charge of nutriment and rags having been at least four times that value.

I shall now, therefore, humbly propose my own thoughts, which I hope will not be liable to the least objection.

I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child, well nursed, is, at a year old, a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food,

whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricassee or a ragout.

I do therefore humbly offer it to public consideration, that of the hundred and twenty thousand children already computed, twenty thousand may be reserved for breed, whereof only one-fourth part to be males; which is more than we allow to sheep, black-cattle, or swine; and my reason is, that these children are seldom the fruits of marriage, a circumstance not much regarded by our savages, therefore one male will be sufficient to serve four females. That the remaining hundred thousand may, at a year old, be offered in sale to the persons of quality and fortune through the kingdom; always advising the mother to let them suck plentifully in the last month, so as to render them plump and fat for a good table. A child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends; and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish, and, seasoned with a little pepper or salt, will be very good boiled on the fourth day, especially in winter.

As to our city of Dublin, shambles [slaughter houses] may be appointed for this purpose in the most convenient parts of it, and butchers, we may be assured, will not be wanting; although I rather recommend buying the children alive, then dressing them hot from the knife, as we do roasting pigs.

A very worthy person, a true lover of his country, and whose virtues I highly esteem, was lately pleased, in discoursing on this matter, to offer a refinement upon my scheme. He said, that many gentlemen of this kingdom, having of late destroyed their deer, he conceived that the want of venison might be well supplied by the bodies of young lads and maidens, not exceeding fourteen years of age, nor under twelve; so great a number of both sexes in every country being now ready to starve for want of work and service; and these to be disposed of by their parents, if alive, or otherwise by their nearest relations. But, with due deference to so excellent a friend, and so deserving a patriot, I cannot be altogether in his sentiments; for as to the males, my American acquaintance assured me, from frequent experience, that their flesh was generally tough and lean, like that of our schoolboys, by continual exercise, and their taste disagreeable; and to fatten them would not answer the charge. Then as to the females, it would, I think, with humble submission, be a loss to the public, because they soon would become

breeders themselves: and besides, it is not improbable that some scrupulous people might be apt to censure such a practice, (although indeed very unjustly,) as a little bordering upon cruelty; which, I confess, has always been with me the strongest objection against any project, how well soever intended.

But in order to justify my friend, he confessed that this expedient was put into his head by the famous Psalmanazar, a native of the island Formosa, who came from thence to London above twenty years ago; and in conversation told my friend, that in his country, when any young person happened to be put to death, the executioner sold the carcass to persons of quality as a prime dainty; and that in his time the body of a plump girl of fifteen, who was crucified for an attempt to poison the emperor, was sold to his imperial majesty's prime minister of state, and other great mandarins of the court, in joints from the gibbet, at four hundred crowns. Neither indeed can I deny, that, if the same use were made of several plump young girls in this town, who, without one single groat to their fortunes, cannot stir abroad without a chair, and appear at playhouse and assemblies in foreign fineries which they never will pay for, the kingdom would not be the worse.

Some persons of a desponding spirit are in great concern about that vast number of poor people, who are aged, diseased, or maimed; and I have been desired to employ my thoughts, what course may be taken to ease the nation of so grievous an encumbrance. But I am not in the least pain upon that matter, because it is very well known, that they are every day dying, and rotting, by cold and famine, and filth and vermin, as fast as can be reasonably expected. And as to the young labourers, they are now in almost as hopeful a condition: they cannot get work, and consequently pine away for want of nourishment, to a degree, that if at any time they are accidentally hired to common labour, they have not strength to perform it; and thus the country and themselves are happily delivered from the evils to come.

I have too long digressed, and therefore shall return to my subject. I think the advantages by the proposal which I have made are obvious and many, as well as of the highest importance.

For first, as I have already observed, it would greatly lessen the number of Papists, with whom we are yearly over-run, being the principal breeders of the nation, as well as our most dangerous enemies; and who stay at home on purpose to deliver the kingdom to

the Pretender, hoping to take their advantage by the absence of so many good Protestants, who have chosen rather to leave their country than stay at home and pay tithes against their conscience to an Episcopal curate.

Secondly, The poorer tenants will have something valuable of their own, which by law may be made liable to distress, and help to pay their landlord's rent; their corn and cattle being already seized, and money a thing unknown.

Thirdly, Whereas the maintenance of a hundred thousand children, from two years old and upward, cannot be computed at less than ten shillings a piece per annum, the nation's stock will be thereby increased fifty thousand pounds per annum, beside the profit of a new dish introduced to the tables of all gentlemen of fortune in the kingdom, who have any refinement in taste. And the money will circulate among ourselves, the goods being entirely of our own growth and manufacture.

Fourthly, The constant breeders, beside the gain of eight shillings sterling per annum by the sale of their children, will be rid of the charge of maintaining them after the first year.

Fifthly, This food would likewise bring great custom to taverns; where the vintners will certainly be so prudent as to procure the best receipts for dressing it to perfection, and, consequently, have their houses frequented by all the fine gentlemen, who justly value themselves upon their knowledge in good eating: and a skilful cook, who understands how to oblige his guests, will contrive to make it as expensive as they please.

Sixthly, This would be a great inducement to marriage, which all wise nations have either encouraged by rewards, or enforced by laws and penalties. It would increase the care and tenderness of mothers toward their children, when they were sure of a settlement for life to the poor babes, provided in some sort by the public, to their annual profit or expense. We should see an honest emulation among the married women, which of them could bring the fattest child to the market. Men would become as fond of their wives during the time of their pregnancy as they are now of their mares in foal, their cows in calf, their sows when they are ready to farrow; nor offer to beat or kick them (as is too frequent a practice) for fear of a miscarriage.

Many other advantages might be enumerated. For instance, the addition of some thousand carcasses in our exportation of bar-

relled beef; the propagation of swine's flesh, and improvement in the art of making good bacon, so much wanted among us by the great destruction of pigs, too frequent at our table; which are no way comparable in taste or magnificence to a well-grown, fat, yearling child, which, roasted whole, will make a considerable figure at a lord mayor's feast, or any other public entertainment. But this, and many others, I omit, being studious of brevity.

Supposing that one thousand families in this city would be constant customers for infants' flesh, beside others who might have it at merry-meetings, particularly at weddings and christenings, I compute that Dublin would take off annually about twenty thousand carcasses; and the rest of the kingdom (where probably they will be sold somewhat cheaper) the remaining eighty thousand.

I can think of no one objection, that will possibly be raised against this proposal, unless it should be urged, that the number of people will be thereby much lessened in the kingdom. This I freely own, and it was indeed one principal design in offering it to the world. I desire the reader will observe, that I calculate my remedy for this one individual kingdom of Ireland, and for no other that ever was, is, or I think ever can be, upon earth. Therefore let no man talk to me of other expedients: of taxing our absentees at five shillings a pound: of using neither clothes, nor household furniture, except what is our own growth and manufacture: of utterly rejecting the materials and instruments that promote foreign luxury: of curing the expensiveness of pride, vanity, idleness, and gaming in our women: of introducing a vein of parsimony, prudence, and temperance: of learning to love our country, in the want of which we differ even from LAPLANDERS, and the inhabitants of TOPINAMBOO: of quitting our animosities and factions, nor acting any longer like the Jews, who were murdering one another at the very moment their city was taken: of being a little cautious not to sell our country and conscience for nothing: of teaching landlords to have at least one degree of mercy toward their tenants: lastly, of putting a spirit of honesty, industry, and skill into our shopkeepers; who, if a resolution could now be taken to buy only our native goods, would immediately unite to cheat and exact upon us in the price, the measure, and the goodness, nor could ever yet be brought to make one fair proposal of just dealing, though often and earnestly invited to it.

Therefore I repeat, let no man talk to me of these and the like

expedients, till he has at least some glimpse of hope, that there will be ever some hearty and sincere attempt to put them in practice.

But, as to myself, having been wearied out for many years with offering vain, idle, visionary thoughts, and at length utterly despairing of success, I fortunately fell upon this proposal; which, as it is wholly new, so it has something solid and real, of no expense and little trouble, full in our own power, and whereby we can incur no danger in disobliging ENGLAND. For this kind of commodity will not bear exportation, the flesh being of too tender a consistence to admit a long continuance in salt, although perhaps I could name a country, which would be glad to eat up our whole nation without it.

After all, I am not so violently bent upon my own opinion as to reject any offer proposed by wise men, which shall be found equally innocent, cheap, easy, and effectual. But before something of that kind shall be advanced in contradiction to my scheme, and offering a better, I desire the author, or authors, will be pleased maturely to consider two points. First, as things now stand, how they will be able to find food and raiment for a hundred thousand useless mouths and backs. And, secondly, there being a round million of creatures in human figure throughout this kingdom, whose whole subsistence put into a common stock would leave them in debt two millions of pounds sterling, adding those who are beggars by profession, to the bulk of farmers, cottagers, and labourers, with the wives and children who are beggars in effect; I desire those politicians who dislike my overture, and may perhaps be so bold as to attempt an answer, that they will first ask the parents of these mortals, whether they would not at this day think it a great happiness to have been sold for food at a year old, in the manner I prescribe, and thereby have avoided such a perpetual scene of misfortunes, as they have since gone through, by the oppression of landlords, the impossibility of paying rent without money or trade, the want of common sustenance, with neither house nor clothes to cover them from the inclemencies of the weather, and the most inevitable prospect of entailing the like, or greater miseries, upon their breed for ever.

I profess, in the sincerity of my heart, that I have not the least personal interest in endeavouring to promote this necessary work, having no other motive than the public good of my country, by advancing our trade, providing for infants, relieving the poor, and

giving some pleasure to the rich. I have no children by which I can propose to get a single penny; the youngest being nine years old, and my wife past child-bearing.

SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING

Write an ironic essay, with Swift your model. It need not be profound. Take some notorious collegiate fact or trait, and write, for instance, "A Modest Proposal to Encourage Recreation on Weekends." Imagine yourself a myopic do-gooder, and write an earnest, and modest, appeal to pry the students away from the books. Build your essay, as Swift does, on a regular argumentative structure with beginning, middle, and end. Your thesis will be ironic, of course; but develop it as you would any argumentative thesis, using one of the *pro-con* structures on pages 48–49. Since irony depends on a shared understanding between writer and reader, you must pick some topic of common knowledge—or your irony will not be understood, and you will be talking in riddles. Since to write ironically you must be personally concerned, the world-shaking issues will probably be a little too impersonal for effective irony. And so again, pick something perfectly familiar, even playful and trivial, something like blind dates, roommates, dormitory food, eight o'clock classes, teased coiffures and blue eyelids, cluttering the walks with parked bicycles, or cluttering the lanes with parked cars.

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*Evidence &
the Author's Voice*

Murder Trial in Moscow • JEREMY R. AZRAEL

Rebels or Psychopaths?

ROBERT LINDNER, *as reported by* TIME

Democracy and Anti-intellectualism in America

RICHARD HOFSTADTER

*Blueprint for a Silver Age: Notes on a Visit
to America* • CYRIL CONNOLLY

FOUR MEN ENCOUNTER the pressures of conformity. One writes of Russia; the others, of America. The first, a political scientist, writes an autobiographical anecdote; the second, a psychologist, delivers a speech; the third, an historian, composes a learned essay; the fourth, a literary critic, records his observations in a brilliant notebook. Each writes with equal conviction. Yet each speaks with a different voice, invoking different rhetorical powers to persuade his readers that his view is, in fact, true. These essays may stand in outline of the many styles and of the many possible ways of presenting evidence in support of a truth.

Here are some contrasts to notice. Azrael, relying on a swift narrative prose of straightforward sentences, uses little more than keen vignette and quotation. His essay is virtually all evidence, selected and pointed and reported at firsthand, which speaks for itself and carries you toward the thesis he does not state until the end, and then only obliquely. Lindner, on the other hand, speaks from a fund of experience, of which he feels he need place only a few examples in evidence. He is expounding a clear thesis, but in prose far more oratorical and figurative than Azrael's ("Into these mindless associations the young flock like cattle"). Hofstadter, whose essay may serve as our concluding example of expository and organizational excellence, writes a tidy, serviceable prose, capable of graceful subordination and lively phrasing (as in his fourth paragraph, with *eclipse* and *day*, with *living* and *dead*). His essay being long, he begins with not only a thesis but a plan of attack as well. Notice his organization and his use of quotation and other evidence. Connolly, in notes that reflect the speed of his visit, returns us to the scintillating and pungent prose with which Virginia Woolf launched us, a prose well aged in reading, and alive with pictures: "manholes like geysers on the moon." Notice how little documentation Connolly finds necessary, so full is he of powerful metaphor and epigram.

Murder Trial in Moscow

J E R E M Y R . A Z R A E L

WE FIRST LEARNED of the case of Aleksandr Ivanovich Bazhenov from an announcement on the bulletin board of Moscow University's law faculty which signaled forthcoming trials of special interest to aspiring Soviet jurists. However, despite this publicity, we were the only representatives of the university present in the small courtroom of the Moscow Oblast Court when, at 10 A.M. on November 10, the Bazhenov case was called. The rest of the audience consisted of sundry courtroom hangers-on, a sizable group of Bazhenov's neighbors, Bazhenov's wife, and the mother and several

relatives of Bazhenov's victim. For Bazhenov was charged under Article 136a of the Criminal Code of the Russian republic, the article dealing with premeditated murder from base motives.

People's Judge Ivan Sergeyevich Shepilov summarized the bare details of the charge from the record of the pre-trial investigation which lay on his desk. First, however, he confirmed the identity and vital statistics of the accused, made sure that the latter did not object to the defense attorney who had been assigned him, and, after reading the law covering perjury, registered the witnesses who were slated to be heard.

Bazhenov, it was established, had been born in 1926, was a resident of a small village in Penza province, was of peasant origin and Russian nationality, was married but childless, had had six years of education, had served in the army from 1943 to 1950, was not a member of the Communist Party, had never before been accused or convicted of any crime, and, prior to his arrest, had been employed as a carpenter in a small factory. He was accused of having shot one Vladimir Silkin, aged fourteen, when the latter, along with three youthful companions, invaded his private apple orchard at midnight on August 9, 1958.

This was the sum and substance of the formal charge, although, informed as it was by such technical details as the number (78) and location (the chest) of the gunshot wounds found on Silkin's body, it took Judge Shepilov a full fifteen minutes to read it through. When he had finished, he asked Bazhenov whether he acknowledged the charge and asked the defense and prosecuting attorneys and the two people's assessors, lay jurymen assigned to decide the case along with him, whether they had any questions about it. Receiving an affirmative answer from Bazhenov and a negative answer from the attorneys and assessors, Shepilov requested the accused to rise and give his own version of the case.

Bazhenov, it quickly became clear, was precisely what his appearance suggested: a simple, inarticulate peasant. He was obviously bewildered and terrified by his current predicament and could scarcely speak. Moreover, he was given no opportunity to compose himself, for, at almost every word he uttered, Judge Shepilov interjected an acid comment or supercilious question, thus frightening and bewildering the accused yet further. As a result, Bazhenov's testimony added little to our knowledge of the events of the case. All it really did was give us our first insight into

the character of Judge Shepilov, or, at least, into his attitude toward the case at hand:

BAZHENOV: I shot into the air.

SHEPILOV: But a man fell. Do you think we're fools? You shot at people.

BAZHENOV: I didn't want to kill anyone.

SHEPILOV: Really? Did you think that if you shot a man he would become healthier?

BAZHENOV: I didn't want to kill.

SHEPILOV: I didn't ask what you wanted.

BAZHENOV: I didn't want to.

SHEPILOV: Why did you do it, if you didn't want to?

(Silence)

SHEPILOV: Did you think nothing was more important than apples? Why did you kill?

BAZHENOV: On account of apples. . . .

BAZHENOV: I wanted to shoot up.

SHEPILOV: Where did you shoot?

BAZHENOV: In the air.

SHEPILOV: Impossible! That, you yourself fully understand. You are speaking nonsense. Where did you in fact shoot?

BAZHENOV: In the chest.

SHEPILOV: If you had wanted to shoot up, at most the head would have been hit. What was the direction of the shot?

BAZHENOV: Upwards.

SHEPILOV: You spent seven years in the army and didn't learn how to shoot? Really! Where did you shoot?

And so on. Bazhenov continued to insist that he had not wanted to kill and had fired into the air. Shepilov continued to insist that both propositions were nonsensical, and the merry-go-round went on for about twenty minutes.

The prosecutor, a sallow, self-satisfied-looking young man, also questioned Bazhenov. "You killed on account of apples? But what could your loss have been? Five or ten apples? Does that justify your shot?"

The examination of Bazhenov then passed into the hands of the defense attorney. Naum Viktorovich Bykovsky, with his carefully trimmed goatee, wavy gray hair, and comfortably well-

groomed look, was the sort of elderly Russian who almost automatically inspires the confidence and trust of Westerners and frequently arouses the suspicion and hostility of Soviet activists. His questioning of Bazhenov was quiet and solicitous, and gave us our first substantial information about the circumstances of the Bazhenov case.

Bykovsky drew from Bazhenov the following history. The accused was dependent for half his income on the two cubic meters of apples which his small thirteen-tree orchard annually yielded him. However, ever since the orchard had begun to yield fruit, it had been beset by thieves. Often up to half the crop was stolen. During the past summer, Bazhenov testified, losses had been particularly heavy, reaching such proportions in the weeks immediately preceding the crime that he had finally taken to sleeping in the orchard in order to fend off the thieves.

Finally, only two weeks before Silkin's death, he had managed to catch two thieves in the orchard. However, when he attempted to detain them, he was set upon and badly beaten. He had reported this to the militia, but, so far as he knew, no investigation had been conducted. In any event, his assailants had not been apprehended. With this experience behind him, he had decided to buy a shotgun, and it was with this weapon that he had shot Silkin when, upon being awakened at midnight, he had seen four figures in the orchard. He had not, in the darkness, been able to perceive that the intruders were adolescents, but he had given a warning whistle before firing, and he had fired—or, at least, had intended to fire—into the air.

With his client's version of the case fully recorded, Bykovsky closed his examination. Judge Shepilov thereupon started to call the first witness, but the prosecutor interrupted with a request to ask the accused just one more question. His purpose was not clarification but reiteration of what was clearly the foundation stone of the prosecution's case: "You intended merely to save apples, and that's all?" Again Bazhenov responded affirmatively, and the parade of witnesses was permitted to begin.

The first three witnesses were Silkin's companions on the fateful midnight raid. All three were sixteen-year-old factory apprentices; all three told substantially the same story. They were returning home from a public dance and, on passing Bazhenov's orchard, suddenly decided to filch a few apples. All testified that Silkin had

been reluctant to take part in the foray but had finally followed them over the orchard's fence. All vigorously denied having stolen apples from Bazhenov or anyone else earlier. The only point on which they disagreed was whether or not the fatal shot had been preceded by a warning whistle.

The first of the boys to testify, the only one of the three who told his story clearly and coherently, claimed to remember such a whistle. The second, who insisted that the tragedy had occurred in July, not August, denied that there had been a whistle, and he was supported by the third. The point was clearly important to the attorneys as an index of Bazhenov's intent, and both pursued the issue vigorously. Apart from this question, however, the prosecutor examined the boys only cursorily, and Bykovsky sought to establish that the boys, each of whom earned three hundred rubles a month, could have afforded to buy apples.

The last witness was Bazhenov's wife, whose testimony confirmed that of her husband as to the care they had lavished on their orchard, its economic importance to them, the high losses they had sustained at the hands of thieves, the disruption of their normal lives brought about by the need for Bazhenov to sleep in the orchard, and the severity of Bazhenov's injuries from the incident two weeks prior to Silkin's death. She reported that when Bazhenov ran into the house on the fateful night and announced that he had just killed a man, her first words were, "You had better go to the militia," and this rang true to her general character as it was revealed in the tone of her testimony. She spoke without the least trace of emotion, throughout referred to Bazhenov as "he," and cast nary a glance toward the prisoner's dock. And yet one somehow felt that there was more of peasant fatalism than of conjugal distance or betrayal in all this.

When the witnesses finished their testimony, Judge Shepilov asked the attorneys whether they had any further evidence to introduce before beginning their summaries and pleas. The defense attorney introduced the accused's war record and work record. Bazhenov had won two citations for wounds received in battle and a First of May citation for good work. The mention of war wounds had obviously won the respect of the audience, but the mention of the work citation called forth a low roll of laughter that clearly said, "Who hasn't received such a certificate? You're really scraping the bottom of the barrel." It was, therefore, on a slightly less than

overwhelming note that Bykovsky resumed his seat, and a ten-minute recess was declared before the court would reconvene for final arguments.

Like the majority of the courtroom spectators, we took advantage of the recess to stretch our legs in the corridor. However, despite the obvious desire of several of the spectators to talk to us, we moved off a bit and simply listened and watched.

The mother of the victim, Silkin, sat sobbing quietly on a bench just outside the courtroom door. She had already caused some commotion in the courtroom, first by fainting as Judge Shepilov read the indictment with its gruesome description of the state of the corpse, and then by going into hysterics during the testimony of her son's companions. On both occasions there had been a murmur of sympathy from the audience, which subsided only after Judge Shepilov rapped sharply for silence and warned that "This is a trial, not a spectacle."

Now, however, the sobbing mother seemed to arouse the ire of the waiting crowd. Several elderly men from among the courtroom hangers-on in the audience turned on her and began to upbraid her for having raised a thief. "What but a bad end," they demanded, "could be anticipated for such a son?"

The mother broke into yet louder and more bitter sobs. Over and over she shrieked, "No, no, he was a good boy." But her protests seemed simply to increase the vehemence of her tormentors, who let loose a flood of cruel, mocking laughter interspersed with asides about the fate of thieves, the just deserts of delinquents, the way children reflect their parents' character.

No one intervened, no one said, "Leave the poor, bereaved woman alone!" Even the woman herself did not plead to be left in peace.

Immediately upon reconvening the court, Judge Shepilov called upon the prosecutor to sum up his case. The latter spoke rapidly and without passion—indeed, almost without expression. His summation, which was chaotically organized, reinforced our impression that he was so certain of the outcome of the case that he attached little importance to its presentation. The main themes of his summation could, of course, have been predicted from his prior arguments, but what was surprising was the cavalier fashion in which he handled the two legal problems on which the outcome of the case would presumably hinge: was the murder premeditated

and was it, as the relevant article of the code insisted it had to be, committed from base motives?

As for premeditation, the prosecutor's argument was simple: Bazhenov's intent to murder was proved by the fact that he had loaded his shotgun with live ammunition and had incontrovertibly, his professions to the contrary notwithstanding, fired not into the air but directly at a person. The fact that Bazhenov had perhaps not intended the specific murder which occurred was, he asserted, irrelevant.

The issue of motivation seemed to him equally clear-cut. Soviet law, he said, was always especially severe where the protection of life was concerned, but it had to be doubly so when life was taken in defense of a few apples. Bazhenov himself had admitted repeatedly that he had murdered for the sake of apples. "What," the prosecutor asked, "could be more miserly or base than to take the life of a fourteen-year-old boy for the sake of ten apples?" Bazhenov had a full range of defensive measures available for the protection of his orchard, but willfully chose to kill, and that without even a warning. The motive, the prosecutor reiterated, was to save a few apples; the victim was a young boy who had not even begun to live. "In the light of these facts," he concluded, "I ask for a finding of guilty under Article 136a of the Criminal Code and request that the court return the normal maximum sentence of ten years' deprivation of liberty."

The entire tone and style of the prosecutor's speech, which it had taken him only twelve minutes to deliver, contrasted sharply with that of defense attorney Bykovsky, who now rose to deliver his summation. The argument was both tightly organized and forceful, and skillfully blended four distinct elements. First, there was a careful reference to rulings and instructions from higher courts which bore on the case at hand. Second, there was a moving appeal, in the best tradition of Russian courtroom pleading, that the court put the case in the proper human perspective and judge only the individual who faced it. Third, there was a reinterpretation of the evidence in terms of the preceding elements—in terms of the rulings of higher courts and the individual circumstances of the accused. And finally, there was a striking reference to the possibilities of true justice, which had been introduced into Soviet judicial practice after Stalin's death and were being put to the test in the present case.

Bykovsky stressed the fact that Bazhenov had been subjected to extreme provocation and that every Soviet citizen had the right to defend his property against thieves. However, he went much further. He opened his remarks by expressing his sympathy to Silkin's relatives. He spoke with great emotion of how blessed was the gift of life, of how easy it was to snuff out and how impossible to restore. And then, wheeling toward the bench, he reminded the court that, though Silkin's life was gone, Bazhenov was still alive, and that his fate, the fate of a living human being, rested now with the court.

Bazhenov, Bykovsky expostulated, was a poor and simple soul. He had given seven years of his life to the service of his country and upon returning to civilian life had sought, above all, peace and quiet. He had worked diligently and had devoted every spare moment to his small orchard. The orchard, Bykovsky argued, was much more than a source of profit to Bazhenov; it was a source of stability and personal satisfaction. However, as soon as the orchard had begun to flourish, it had been beset by thieves. Bazhenov had been forced to abandon his hearth and sleep amidst his precious trees in order to protect them and all they stood for. His whole life had been disrupted. And when he at last managed to catch some thieves, he had been badly beaten. Yet, even then the militia had done nothing except file a report on the assault.

It was only at this point, Bykovsky went on, only after he had been harassed, insulted, and injured, only after he had looked in vain to the public authorities for support, that Bazhenov, in desperation, had purchased a gun. There could be no doubt, Bykovsky asserted, that a Soviet citizen possessed the right to defend his property against hooligans and thieves. How, he demanded, could one attribute the exercise of this right to base motives, and hence bring it under Article 136a? Must one simply yield to a thief who demands one's clothing or watch? Could resistance to the thief in such a case be attributed to base motives?

Previously, Bykovsky remonstrated in a low voice, it had been an accepted part of Soviet court practice to attribute the worst imaginable motives to the accused and to avoid inquiry into the specific circumstances which surrounded an alleged crime. Then, Bykovsky continued, it had been customary to consider the trial nothing more than a ceremonial ritual, after which the accused was automatically given the severest possible sentence. But now,

Bykovsky emphatically reminded the court, all that had changed. Apropos of the present case, one could see the change in the Judicial Instruction handed down in 1956 by the U.S.S.R. Supreme Court, directing all lower courts to recognize that all citizens had the right of *active* defense of their property as well as their bodies and lives against hooligans.

How, Bykovsky thundered, could any prosecutor in 1958 claim that Bazhenov's act was one of premeditated murder from base motives? Try as he might, Bykovsky asserted, he could find nothing in any authoritative judicial text or contemporary directive which suggested that Bazhenov's act was anything more than active defense of property.

It was true, Bykovsky conceded, that active defense was justified only in response to a "socially dangerous attack," but that was precisely the nature of the robbery attempted by the unfortunate Silkin and his comrades. The boys could have bought apples, yet they stole; and Silkin was shot in the act of theft itself. "Socially dangerous? Of course! If one asks, 'Where can one go from apples?', the answer is, 'A long way. One can go to a watch, a jacket, a suit, and so forth.' The populace demands that the fruits of its labors be protected."

The only relevant question, Bykovsky maintained, was that of the degree of proportionality between attack and defense. The prosecutor, he insisted, was wrong to suggest that any question of proportionality between apples and lives was involved. No jurist would frame the question in this way. As for the really relevant question, Bykovsky went on, the defense itself was persuaded that Bazhenov had adopted a disproportionate defensive response. Bykovsky asserted that for this reason he himself did not consider it possible to recommend the simple acquittal of his client. However, the maximum sentence which could be tolerated was three years, and even that would be grossly excessive.

Bazhenov's crime clearly falls under Article 139 of the Criminal Code—the article which deals specifically with overly extreme measures of defense. Under this article, Bazhenov is guilty. He should have shot into the air or perhaps toward the boy's feet. But some sort of *active* defense was appropriate and necessary. Even if Silkin and his comrades had simply been innocently strolling through the orchard, the court would have to make a distinction

between the objective situation and the motives of the accused. In even this hypothetical case, the relevant article would still be 139. In the actual case at hand, where not innocent strolling but criminal theft characterized the objective situation, there is clearly no way to go beyond Article 139. Neither sympathy for the relatives of the deceased nor outdated judicial habit should or can lead us to apply the wrong article.

The prosecutor, who was visibly stunned by the vigor of the defense, demanded rebuttal time. There was real wonder in his voice as he admitted, "My, my . . . so to speak . . . opponent is right about the instruction of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Court." However, the prosecutor went on to say that his "opponent" had failed to mention that the Criminal Code of the Russian republic, while not denying citizens the right to active defense of their private property, specifically directed that great caution be exercised where only gardens or orchards were involved. This, he argued, constituted a warning to the courts that such things as the theft of apples by children did not justify active measures of defense.

To this, Bykovsky, in his very brief rebuttal of the prosecutor's rebuttal, pointed out that at midnight on a dark night one could neither distinguish adolescents from adults nor be expected to ascertain the age of one's assailants before acting in self-defense. He did not contest the prosecutor's characterization of the Russian code, but simply reiterated the instruction of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Court and suggested that it was precisely because an orchard was involved that he had conceded Bazhenov's action was excessive. Certainly, Bykovsky concluded, there was nothing in the code to support the prosecutor's suggestion that action in defense of one's orchard was automatically tantamount to action inspired by base motives.

With the summations and rebuttals completed, Judge Shepilov declared a one-hour luncheon recess, to be followed by the final statement of the accused. As his four guards with their bayoneted rifles led Bazhenov from the room, we approached Bykovsky and congratulated him on his conduct of the case. We explained that we were American students of Soviet affairs and told him that it would be a pleasure to report that the quality of defense in Soviet trials was so high. We told him that, to our minds, he had made the prosecutor's case appear exceedingly flimsy.

Bykovsky thanked us with real warmth, but quickly changed the subject and began to inquire further about our special interests, our status in the Soviet Union, the nature of American legal training. Every time we tried to turn the discussion back to the Bazhenov case, he became distinctly ill at ease.

It was impossible, under the circumstances, to press him hard, but finally, after he had begun to glance at his watch, we asked what sort of decision he expected the court to return. We ourselves were quite optimistic, for we had by now adopted Bykovsky's case as well as been persuaded by it, and therefore were rather surprised when Bykovsky, after hesitating just a second, said in a voice that seemed to us strangely sober and resigned, "You will see." And with that he disappeared into his chamber.

After lunch, Bazhenov made his last statement in a whispered mutter. His head was cast down and his brow furrowed, and the words came out jerkily and expressionless: "I did not want to kill. I received two wounds in the war. I was beaten only ten days before the accident, and the militia did nothing. I loved my orchard and only wanted to protect it. I paid over six hundred rubles for my trees." And with this last exalted sentiment, Bazhenov resumed his seat. His mercenary conclusion surely had not been advised by Bykovsky and showed perhaps more clearly than anything else Bazhenov's own true character and total lack of sensitivity to the process in which he was caught up. It would, we feared, hardly turn the court's final deliberations in his favor. However, Judge Shepilov evidently did not contemplate that lengthy deliberations would be necessary in any case. Immediately after Bazhenov's statement, he announced that the court would reconvene for sentencing in fifty minutes.

When the court reconvened, Judge Shepilov immediately began to read an almost interminable but carefully organized decision which rehearsed all the facts of the case and all of the interpretations adduced. Two pages were devoted to a new description of the condition of Silkin's body after the shotgun blast. Shepilov's view of the case was clear-cut: the murder was ghastly, it was committed for the sake of a few apples, base motives were unmistakably at its root, it clearly fell under Article 136a, defining premeditated murder. The argument of the prosecution had carried the day, and the prosecutor leaned back in his chair with a sigh of

satisfaction. Bykovsky did not raise his head from his papers. The audience waited for the sentence to be pronounced in a silence that was electric with anticipation.

"The crime," Judge Shepilov said slowly, "is not merely horrible; it is full of implications which justify our considering it a socially dangerous crime. In light of this fact, the crime falls outside the limits visualized in the scale of normal penalties attached to Article 136a. Because his crime was particularly socially dangerous, the court sentences the accused to the extreme measure of social defense, death by shooting." And then, fairly screaming at the defendant, "Clear enough?"

There was a gasp throughout the courtroom, and then, for the minute it took the shock to set in, there was silence. The first sound to be heard was a long, low sob from Bazhenov's wife, followed immediately, as if in response, by shouts of "Correct, correct, thank God, thank God" from Silkin's mother and several of her friends. These worn *babas* struggled to their feet and began frantically to cross themselves as they shouted. As the members of the bench filed out, these women pushed toward the aisle and reached out to touch Judge Shepilov as he passed, stern-faced, eyes straight ahead. "Thank God." "Correct, correct." "Thank you, thank you, thank you," they cried.

They turned with curses and imprecations on Bazhenov, who sat slumped in his seat. His wife, who had broken into uncontrollable sobs, they simultaneously belabored with derisive howls of glee and consoled with comments on her still young years and new-won freedom. Finally, they noticed us staring at them, and evidently they sensed a challenge in our look. "The verdict was right; the verdict was right, wasn't it?" several voices demanded.

We shrugged, but the demand was put again and again, more and more imperatively, and, at the same time, more and more imploringly, as if all their conclusions and the rectitude of all their actions hinged on our assent. At last, braving we knew not what, we said that we could not agree with either the verdict or the sentence. They must know as well as we, we said, that the fatal words "socially dangerous" were ordinarily applied only to crimes of high political import or to serious crimes committed by recidivists. The Soviet Union boasted to the entire world that to all intents and purposes it had no death penalty, and the entire world believed

that this was so to all intents and purposes, even when it knew about the existence of the extraordinary provision dealing with "socially dangerous crimes."

There was a sudden silence, and then one wrinkled old woman leaned forward and, as the others drew around, whispered, "You don't know Bazhenov. He's a monster, a fiend. Why, just before he killed Silkin, he gnawed the hand from a five-year-old baby whom he caught in his orchard. He's a cannibal. He's had six children of his own, but he's boiled them all in oil. You don't know Bazhenov." The eyes of our aged confidante grew narrower as she spoke; her tone grew ever more mysterious. At first the crowd around us listened with as much wonder as we, but soon they began to nod vigorously. "He ate off a boy's hand," one repeated. "Boiled his own children," rasped another. A village legend, the legend of the monster Bazhenov, was being created. It was as if, having seen Bazhenov's fate, his neighbors had concluded that the accused had to be a satanic fiend. As if this were the only way they could make the outcome of the trial comprehensible. We were the catalysts that called their response forth, but once the moral was established, our belief or disbelief became irrelevant, and no one tried to detain us as we edged out of the circle.

It was only after we had found a café in which to collect our breaths and our thoughts that we realized that perhaps there was a sense in which the response of Bazhenov's fellow villagers was more than merely psychologically noteworthy. Perhaps the trial we had just witnessed had been intended not merely to uphold the law but to point a broader moral.

There was the fact that the Bazhenov case had been singled out for its special interest to law students. There was the whole tenor of Judge Shepilov's initial examination of the accused. There was the prosecutor's concentration on the nonjuridical aspects of the case and his obvious complacency about the outcome. There was the surprise shown at the vigor of Bykovsky's defense of the accused. There was Bykovsky's stress on the illegitimacy of ceremonial trials, coupled, however, with his unwillingness to ask that his client be acquitted. Finally, there was Bykovsky's message to us. Retrospectively, his "You will see" seemed to suggest: "No matter that you are persuaded and impressed by my defense; the key to this case lies outside my influence."

However, though they had, in a sense, been less naïve than we,

Bazhenov's neighbors had surely drawn the wrong lesson from the trial. Their legend completely blunted the political and ideological moral the regime intended, which was not that Bazhenov was evil incarnate but rather that he had *become* evil incarnate under the corrupting influence of acquisitiveness and selfishness rooted in the possession of private property. It was not Bazhenov's having succumbed to evil instincts that was to be stressed, but his having succumbed to evil and "backward" instincts—the retrograde instincts of capitalism. The trial, we concluded, was very probably intended to serve as an especially significant object lesson in the regime's perpetual, and recently intensified, campaign against manifestations of the psychology of private ownership.

Yet there remained a puzzle. The regime's campaign against manifestations of the "bourgeois property instinct," while it had been energetic, had not been outrightly terroristic in recent years, especially where the rural population, with its deep-rooted attachment to its garden plots, was concerned. Judge Shepilov's sentence, however, had smacked of outright terrorism. It was, therefore, with some interest that we learned that on appeal by the *prosecutor* the Supreme Court of the Russian republic had reduced Bazhenov's sentence to ten years. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court did not explain the rationale behind its decision. What seemed likely, if our interpretative hypothesis was correct, was that at the original trial Judge Shepilov, aware that the case before him had special political and ideological significance, had overreacted. The purpose of the appeal, then, apart from salving the prosecutor's pride, was to rebuke the judge for his excessive zeal and the distortion of the "true" moral of the trial which was its consequence.

Another possibility was that the Supreme Court was striking against the continued presence of much wider tendencies on the part of some Soviet judges to invoke the "socially dangerous" escape clause in the law code as readily as they had prior to Stalin's death. The reduction of sentence might, that is, have been a partial vindication of legality in the Western sense—an attack on judicial terror in general and not merely on its clumsy use in a politically sensitive situation. But if this had been the intended implication, it would have been conveyed much more effectively had the Supreme Court reviewed the case on an appeal not from the prosecutor but from defense lawyer Bykovsky, or, at the very least, had the Supreme Court followed Bykovsky's recommendations as to the proper

article to apply to the case and the appropriate sentence to impose. In short, we still felt that the Bazhenov case was a miscarriage of justice and that the probable explanation lay outside the legal system proper. Certainly Bykovsky was not formally vindicated by the Supreme Court. And yet we were aware that in a long-term perspective, the most significant thing about the Bazhenov trial might well be that Bykovsky's voice was heard.

Rebels or Psychopaths?

ROBERT LINDNER,
as reported by TIME

EVERY SUCCEEDING ERA is puzzled or even frightened by the behavior of "the younger generation." But the U.S. today is more than usually concerned with the state of its youth. Juvenile delinquents appear (from often confusing statistics) to be increasing in numbers; certainly their crimes have increased in violence and often drip horror.

Few psychologists are better equipped to diagnose the complaint than Baltimore's Robert Lindner. He has studied young people as a practicing analyst, as consulting psychologist to Maryland's state prisons as well as to the federal penitentiary at Lewisburg, Pa. Dr. Lindner has reached the startling conclusion that the youth of today is suffering from a severe, collective mental illness. While many parents—and some of Dr. Lindner's own colleagues—will not go along with him all the way, his diagnosis is provocative.

"Until quite recently," Lindner told a Los Angeles audience, "the rebellion of youth could be viewed with the detachment usually accorded anything so common and natural. The brute fact of today is that our youth is no longer in rebellion, but in a condition of downright active and hostile mutiny. Within the memory of every living adult, a profound and terrifying change has overtaken adolescence."

ACTION AND THE HERD. Lindner sees two main symptoms of this change:

Today's youth has a tendency "to act out, to display, his inner turmoil, in direct contrast to the suffering-out of the same internal agitation by adolescents of yesteryear." Among Lindner's examples: four Brooklyn youths arrested last August, among other things, for beating an old man to death in a park—as Lindner puts it, "a devil's rosary of crimes ranging from rape to murder, and all stamped with an unbelievable degree of sadism." Another of his examples: the New Zealand girl, Pauline Parker, 16, who savagely murdered her mother, assisted by a girl friend, Juliet Hulme, 15. Both, says Lindner, quoting from news reports, "exulted over their crime" and "showed no reasonable emotional appreciation of their situation."

Though juvenile crime is more fully reported nowadays than ever before, Dr. Lindner still feels that there is a real contrast between the woes of today's youth and "those classical descriptions of the storms of adolescence detailed by Shakespeare, Goethe, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Twain, Dickens, Joyce, Mann and the rest." These, he says, were all inward storms. "Lust was in their creations, also vast and devouring if nameless hungers, as well as cosmic yearnings, strange thirsts, occult sensations, murderous rages, vengeful fantasies and imaginings that catalogue all of sin and crime. But, unlike the sorry six from Brooklyn and New Zealand, in them these impulses were contained within the skin's envelope, merely felt and suffered in the private agony of a tormenting preadulthood."

The second major symptom about today's youth, according to Lindner, lies in "the abandonment of that solitude which was at once the trademark of adolescence and the source of its deepest despairs as of its dubious ecstasies. And frequently this solitude was creative. From it sometimes came the dreams, the hopes and the soaring aims that charged life henceforward with meaning and contributed to giving us our poets, artists, scientists. . . . But youth today has abandoned solitude in favor of pack-running, of predatory assembly, of great collectivities that bury, if they do not destroy, individuality. Into these mindless associations the young flock like cattle. The fee they pay for initiation is abandonment of self and immersion in the herd. . . . This innovation can yield no social gain. For it is in solitude that the works of hand, heart and mind are always conceived. In the crowd, herd or gang, it is a mass mind that operates—a mind without subtlety, without compassion, uncivilized."

VIOLENCE WITHOUT CONSCIENCE. An anxious and concerned public, Lindner says, has received from the "experts" only absurd theories and warmed-over nostrums: "Throw away the comic books," "Close down the TV stations," "Return to breastfeeding," and "Get tough with them." But, he adds, "really to understand what is happening to youth requires psychological knowledge. Both the basic tendencies of modern youth—to 'act out' and to drift into herds—are symptoms of a psychiatric condition, worldwide in scope, related directly to the social and political temper of our times. There is only one mental aberration in which these two symptoms coexist: in the psychopathic personality, essentially anti-social, conscienceless, inclined to violence in behavior, and liable to loss of identity in the group, gang, mob or herd. The psychopath is a rebel without a cause—hence, in a chronic state of mutiny. He strives solely for the satisfaction of his moment-to-moment desires. Raw need is all that drives him. . . .

"The youth of the world today is touched with madness, literally sick with an aberrant condition of mind formerly confined to a few distressed souls but now epidemic over the earth."

How did youth get that way? "It is not youth alone that has succumbed to psychopathy, but nations, populations—indeed, the whole of mankind. The world, in short, has run amuck." And how did the world get that way? Dr. Lindner answers that one of the major factors producing psychopathy is damage to the ego. He sees a loss of individuality and consequent damage to the ego in the 20th century's mass political movements, social and industrial giants, wars and economic upheavals. "From loss of identity has come insecurity, and this has bred the soul-destroying plague we know as mass psychopathy. Mass man is the psychopath par excellence."

THE "LIE OF ADJUSTMENT." "In this perspective," says Lindner, "we can no longer regard the mutiny of youth as the product of 'bad' influences, a transient perversity that time will cure or that a few applications of social-service soporifics and mental-hygiene maxims will fix. Mutinous adolescents and their violent deeds now appear as specimens of the shape of things to come, as models of an emergent type of humanity." Furthermore, Lindner believes that society, in trying to combat the epidemic, only compounds the conditions that generate the psychopathic virus—by "the myth of conformity, the big lie of adjustment."

If man is forced from without to conform and from within to rebel, Lindner holds, man makes a compromise: "He rebels within the confines of conformity, he discharges his protest within the limits set by the social order that he has permitted to be erected around him." In a special sense, this is what the honored, respectably liberal Goethe did when he committed his rebelliousness to paper. But man in the mass, who does not have such comfortable literary outlets, can "become transformed into storm trooper, Black-shirt, NKVD inquisitor, guard on the long march from Corregidor, or burner of the fiery cross."

In modern society Dr. Lindner sees "nothing which does not require the young to conform, to adjust, to submit." Along with religion and education he lumps social work, which aims to smooth rough-edged personalities so that they will not rub too harshly on their fellows; also philosophy, recreation and pediatrics: "Each is infused with the rot-producing idea that the salvation of the individual, and so of society, depends upon conformity and adjustment." Thus, in harsher terms, rebellious Psychologist Lindner reaches much the same diagnosis as Social Scientist David Riesman (*TIME*, Sept. 27), who call the pattern of the times "other-directedness."

Concludes Lindner: "This is the very soil in which mass manhood and psychopathy take root and grow. Our adolescents are but one step forward from us upon the road to mass manhood. Into them we have bred our fears and insecurities; upon them we have foisted our mistakes and misconceptions. They are imprisoned by the blunders and delusions of us, their predecessors, and like all prisoners they are mutineers in their hearts."

Democracy & Anti-intellectualism in America

RICHARD HOFSTADTER

INTELLECTUALISM AND DEMOCRACY

AMERICAN EDUCATION TODAY is in the midst of a great crisis, the general outlines of which I believe we can all recognize. About the first part of this crisis, its financial aspect, I shall have nothing to say. A second part of it comes from outside education, in the shape of tremendous pressures to conform, for we live in a society in which the most dynamic force is provided by a small group of politicians who seek to base careers upon the policing of opinion. About the problems of freedom and conformity, I will speak briefly. The third part of this crisis, which concerns me most, is internal; it is less dramatic and perceptible than the others and it has been going on for a longer time. It stems from an inner failure of nerve, for it is nothing less than the growing loss of confidence among educators in the importance and value of the life of the mind, a capitulation within the educational world—indeed, in many quarters an eager capitulation—to the non-intellectual or anti-intellectual criteria that many forces in our society wish to impose upon education and which we might well consider it the bounden duty of educators to resist. It is about this that I wish primarily to speak; and I hope to suggest some relations between this species of educational failure and our popular democracy.

Since I am speaking about education and intellectualism, I want to make it entirely clear that I do not make the mistake of identifying higher education in general with intellectualism. Quite the contrary; I propose to emphasize the extent to which anti-intellectualism is rampant within the educational community. But it is also probably true that in America the greater part of the leadership of those who can be called intellectuals lives and works in

academic communities. And if higher education can be said to be under fire today, it can be said with greater certainty that the distinctively intellectual part of the educational community is the part that stands to lose most.

The crisis in higher education is also a crisis in the history of the intelligentsia. Today, everywhere in America, intellectuals are on the defensive. They have been identified with the now-defeated inheritance of the New Deal and the Fair Deal. That this identification should have been made is ironical, because the New Deal itself, for all its Brain Trusters, had its own streak of anti-intellectualism. But it has also been unfair: the intellectuals are never given credit for the successes of the New Deal, but they have had to take the blame for everything that has been charged up to the Democratic administrations of the past twenty years—with so-called creeping socialism, with the war, with the alleged failure at Yalta, even with treason. In the late presidential campaign a political leader who embodied the kind of traits that the intellectual would most like to see in our national leadership found the support of the intellectuals of slight value in overcoming the disadvantages of his party and his hour. During that campaign the nation also found the epithet for the intellectuals that it has so long wanted—"egg-heads."

Do not imagine, however, that the intellectual is going into permanent eclipse. He always has his day posthumously, for the very men who are most forward in proclaiming their dislike of living intellectuals are the most abject followers of the dead ones. They may not like contemporary intellectuals but they are often quite hypnotized by the intellectual leavings of Adam Smith or Herbert Spencer, or Edmund Burke, or Thomas Aquinas, or similar gods of the past. They have restored an old slogan of the frontiersman with a new meaning and a new object: "The only good intellectual is a dead intellectual."

But what is an intellectual, really? This is a problem of definition that I found, when I came to it, far more elusive than I had anticipated. A great deal of what might be called the journeyman's work of our culture—the work of engineers, physicians, newspapermen, and indeed of most professors—does not strike me as distinctively intellectual, although it is certainly work based in an important sense on ideas. The distinction that we must recognize, then, is one originally made by Max Weber between living *for* ideas and living *off* ideas. The intellectual lives for ideas; the journeyman lives off

them. The engineer or the physician—I don't mean here to be invidious—needs to have a pretty considerable capital stock in frozen ideas to do his work; but they serve for him a purely instrumental purpose: he lives off them, not for them. Of course he may also be, in his private role and his personal ways of thought, an intellectual, but it is not necessary for him to be one in order to work at his profession. There is in fact no profession which demands that one be an intellectual. There do seem to be vocations, however, which almost demand that one be an anti-intellectual, in which those who live off ideas seem to have an implacable hatred for those who live for them. The marginal intellectual workers and the unfrocked intellectuals who work in journalism, advertising, and mass communication are the bitterest and most powerful among those who work at such vocations.

It will help, too, to make the further distinction between living for ideas and living for *an idea*. History is full of cases of great men with good minds, a capacity to deal with abstractions, and a desire to make systems of them—all qualities we associate with the intellectual. But when, as it has in many of them, this concern with ideas, no matter how dedicated and sincere, reduces in the end to the ingenious use of them for a central preconception, however grand, then I think we have very little intellectualism and a great deal of something else. A good historical illustration is that of Lenin, who, as his more theoretical works show, had in him a powerful element of intellectuality; but this intellectuality was rendered thin by his all-absorbing concern with certain very limiting political values. His book on philosophy, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, a shrill work and an extremely depressing one to read, makes it altogether clear that the politician in him swallowed up the intellectual. I choose the illustration of Lenin because it helps me to make another point that seems unfortunately necessary because of the present tendency to identify intellectuals with subversives. That point is that the idea of a party line and political messianism is inherently inconsistent with intellectualism, and those few intellectuals who have in some way survived that tension are few, pitiable, and on the whole sterile.

The journeyman of ideas, and the janizary who makes a somewhat complicated but highly instrumental use of ideas, provide us with two illustrations of people who work with ideas but are not precisely intellectuals, as I understand the term. What, then, are

the differences between the men who work with ideas but are *not* intellectuals and the men who work with ideas and *are* intellectuals?

Two things, that seem in fact to be mutually at odds, mark off the intellectual from the journeyman of ideas; one is playfulness, the other is piety.

Certainly the intellectual, if he is nothing else, is one who relishes *the play of the mind* for its own sake, for whom it is one of the major ends of life. The intellectual has a full quotient of what Veblen called "idle curiosity." His mind, instead of falling to rest when it has provided him with his girl and his automobile and his dinner, becomes even more active. Indeed if we had to define him in physiological terms, we might define him as the creature whose mind is *most* likely to be active after dinner.

I speak of playfulness too because of the peculiar nature of the relationship, in the intellectual's mind, between ideas and practicality. To the journeyman of ideas the be-all and end-all of ideas lies in their practical efficacy. Now the intellectual, by contrast, is not necessarily impractical; I can think of some intellectuals like Thomas Jefferson and Robert Owen and John Maynard Keynes who have been eminently practical, and I consider the notion that the intellectual is inherently impractical to be one of the most contemptible of the delusions with which the anti-intellectual quiets his envy—the intellectual is not impractical but primarily concerned with a quality of ideas that does not depend upon their practicality. He neither reveres nor disdains practical consequences; for him they are either marginal or irrelevant. And when he does talk about the practicality or the "relevance" of ideas, the kind of practicality that he is concerned with is itself somewhat different from the practicality of building a bridge, curing a disease, or making a profit—it is practical relevance to spiritual values themselves.

The best illustration of the intellectual's view of the purely practical that has recently come to my attention is the reaction of Clerk Maxwell, the great nineteenth-century mathematician and theoretical physicist, to the invention of the telephone. Maxwell was asked to give a lecture on the workings of this wonderful new instrument, which he began by saying how difficult it was to believe, when the word first came from America, that such a thing had actually been devised. But then, he said, "when at last this little instrument appeared, consisting, as it does, of parts, every one of which is familiar to us, and capable of being put together by

an amateur, the disappointment arising from its humble appearance was only partially relieved on finding that it was really able to talk." Perhaps, then, this regrettable appearance of simplicity might be redeemed by the presence somewhere of "recondite physical principles, the study of which might worthily occupy an hour's time of an academic audience." But no; Maxwell had not met a single person who could not understand the physical processes involved, and even the science reporters for the daily press had almost got it right! The thing was a disappointing bore; it was not recondite, it was not profound, it was not complex, it was not *intellectually* new.

To be sure, what this illustration suggests is not merely that the telephone disappointed Maxwell as a pure scientist and an intellectual, but that the strain of intellectuality in him was not as broadly developed as it might have been. The telephone might well excite not merely the commercial imagination but the historical imagination. But my point is, after all, not that Maxwell was a universal intellectual, but that he was displaying the attitude of the intellectual in his particular sphere of interest.

The second element in intellectualism is its religious strain, the note of piety. What I mean by this is simply that for the intellectual the whole world of moral values becomes attached to ideas and to the life dedicated to ideas. The life given over to the search for truth takes on for him a primary moral significance. Intellectualism, although hardly confined to doubters, is often the sole piety of the skeptic. A few years ago a distinguished sociologist asked me to read a brief manuscript which he had written primarily for students planning to go on to advanced work in his field, the purpose of which was to illustrate various ways in which the life of the mind might be cultivated. The essay had about it a little too much of the how-to-do books, and my friend abandoned it. But the nub of the matter from the standpoint of our present problem was that I found myself to be reading a piece of devotional literature, comparable perhaps to Cotton Mather's *Essays to do Good* or Richard Steele's *The Tradesman's Calling*. My friend was trying to communicate his sense of dedication to the life of ideas, which he conceived much in the fashion of the old Protestant writers as a *calling*. To work is to pray. Yes, and for this kind of man, to think—really to think—is to pray. What he knows best, when he is at his best, is the pursuit of truth; but *easy* truths bore him. What he is certain of

becomes unsatisfactory always; the meaning of his intellectual life lies in the quest for new uncertainties.

In a bygone day when men lived even more by dogma than they do now, there were two kinds of men whose special office it was to seek for and utter the truth; and they symbolize these two sides of the intellectual's nature. One was the angelic doctor, the learned schoolman, the conservator of old orthodoxies but also the maker of the new, and the prodder at the outer limits of received truths. The other was the jester, the professional fool, who had license to say on occasion for the purposes of amusement and release those things that bordered on *lèse majesté* and could not be uttered by others who were accounted serious men.

The fool and the schoolman are very far apart. No doubt you will ask whether there is not a contradiction between these two qualities of the intellectual, piety and playfulness. Certainly there is great tension between them; human beings are tissues of contradictions, and the life even of the intellectual is not logic, to borrow from Holmes, but experience. If you will think of the intellectuals you know, some will occur to you in whom the note of playfulness seems stronger, others who are predominantly pious. But I believe that in all intellectuals who have any stability as intellectuals—and that includes the angelic doctors of the middle ages—each of these characteristics is at some point qualified by the other. Perhaps the tensile strength of the intellectual can be gauged by his ability to maintain a fair equipoise between these aspects of himself. At one end of the scale, an excess of playfulness leads to triviality, to dilettantism, to cynicism, to the failure of all sustained creative effort. At the other, an excess of piety leads to fanaticism, to messianism, to ways of life that may be morally magnificent or morally mean, but in either case are not quite the ways of intellectualism. It is of the essence of the intellectual that he strikes a balance.

The widespread distrust of intellectuals in America reflects a tendency to depreciate their playfulness and distrust their piety. Ours is a society in which every form of play seems to be accepted by the majority except the play of the mind. It does not need to be explained to most people in America why sports, sex, liquor, gambling, motoring, and gourmandizing are all more or less legitimate forms of amusement for those who happen to find them amusing. The only forms of *mental* play that are similarly accepted

and understood are those that do not involve the particular kinds of critical intelligence that are called into play by intellectualism; I refer, of course, to such highly cerebral amusements as bridge, chess, and the various forms of the crossword puzzle. I suppose that those who are inclined to find economic explanations will point out that the play of the mind, being the only kind that has not been susceptible to commercialization, has not been able to rally the support of a vested interest. I believe, however, that a large part of our common neglect of the humanities is attributable to the absence of a traditional and accepted leisure class which looks upon this kind of personal cultivation as a natural goal of life. The idea of leisured intellectual exercise, not put to the service of some external end, has been offensive to mass democracy. One of the best signs of this is the rhetoric adopted by college presidents and others who appeal to the public for support for education. Always these appeals tell how much education does for citizenship, science, technology, morals, or religion. Rarely do they point to the glories or pleasures of the human mind as an end in itself.

Just as the truly religious man is always a misfit in a secular society, so it is the piety of the intellectual that makes the greatest difficulties for him. Playfulness may be disdained or misunderstood, but it is not usually thought to be dangerous. Piety is another matter, for it is almost certain in the end to challenge something. It is the piety of the intellectual that puts iron into his nonconformism, if he happens to be a nonconformist. It is his piety that will make him, if anything does, a serious moral force in society. In our day the pressures operating against boldness in thought, as well as the sheer bureaucratization of intellectual life, bear hardest against the elements of piety in the intellectual. The temptation is very strong for some intellectuals to suppress the note of piety in themselves, to turn increasingly to the playful and generally more esoteric aspects of their work, to give up the office of spiritual leadership. Such self-suppression is psychologically and morally dangerous, and cannot be indulged in without paying a serious price. It does not become the intellectual, it is much too false to an important part of him, to give in altogether to playfulness and play the fool to the powerful. The jester had his prerogatives, to be sure, but we should also remember that he was usually a slave.

I have attempted thus far to define and elucidate intellectualism. Let me now explain what I mean by democracy when I say

that in an important sense higher education and democracy have often been at odds. I do not mean by democracy simply the indispensable formal essentials of our society—constitutionalism, government by discussion, guarantees for the civil liberties of political minorities. These I neither challenge nor criticize; and I am sure that free higher education cannot in our time stand without them. But I do mean to criticize something that relates to the spirit of our politics, something that for lack of a better term I will call populist democracy. Populistic democracy is neither progressive nor conservative, although it is in a perverse way equalitarian. Populistic democracy is the meeting ground, in fact, of the extreme left and the extreme right. It is government by or through the mass man, disguised behind the mask of an easy sentimentalization of the folk. It is the idea that anything done in the name of the people is *ipso facto* legitimate, even if the same act done in the name of a vested interest would be considered outrageous. It is the idea that a dozen postcards to a congressman from the wildest cranks should be given the same weight as a dozen reasoned letters from sober citizens. Transferred to the field of education, which is our concern, it is the idea that a university ought to cater to the needs of anybody who comes out of or pretends to represent the folk, whether or not he has any real need for or interest in the use of ideas. Put in terms of the state university, it is the idea that any graduate of the public high school should be accepted as a freshman no matter how dismal his prospects are as a student. Put in broader terms, it is the idea that any of the wants, real or fancied, of a mass society, should be absolute imperatives to its system of higher education.

We Americans are noted for our faith in both democracy and education. It has been our assumption that democracy and education, both being good, must be closely related and mutually reinforcing. We should have, it is argued, as much education and as much democracy as possible. It is also assumed that education serves democracy, and one of the most common shibboleths in our educational literature is the slogan "education for democracy." It is characteristically American that very few of us trouble to inquire whether democracy serves education. Whether it does indeed do so as fully and unambiguously as we might consider desirable is the question I insist we must face.

That there is any necessary relation between a vital system of

higher education and a democratic society, one may readily deny on the basis of historical evidence. Two of the greatest periods in university history, that of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and that of the German universities in the nineteenth century, occurred in societies that were not notably democratic. In our own experience, I do not believe it incorrect to say that the great age of American university development from 1870 to 1910 was for the most part an age of political and economic oligarchy; and also that our finest universities and small colleges, by and large, have been those started and endowed by rich men and patronized chiefly by the upper classes.

All this does not mean, of course, that there is any necessary antagonism between democracy and higher education. Presumably there is no inherent or universally necessary opposition between a political democracy and a vital, respected, intellectually rich and alert university system. But I do wish to point out that there has been a historically persistent tension between our popular democracy and intellectualism that has been very sadly felt in the sphere of university and college life. The problem of how democracy and education can best serve and complement each other—as we would all, no doubt, like them to do—has not been nearly as constructively attacked as it might be for the simple reason that it has not often enough been candidly faced.

Long ago Tocqueville saw that the democratic culture that had emerged in the United States had brought with it pressures that were seriously hostile to the free use of the mind. He found that the democratic and equalitarian impulse had weakened the ability of the individual to resist the pressure of the opinion of the mass:

The fact that the political laws of the Americans are such that the majority rules the community with sovereign sway, materially increases the power which that majority naturally exercises over the mind. For nothing is more customary in man than to recognise superior wisdom in the person of his oppressor. . . . The intellectual dominion of the greater number would probably be less absolute among a democratic people governed by a king than in the sphere of a pure democracy, but it will always be extremely absolute; and by whatever political laws men are governed in the ages of equality, it may be foreseen that faith in public opinion may be-

come a species of religion there, and the majority its ministering prophet.

Thus intellectual authority will be different, but it will not be diminished; and far from thinking that it will disappear, I augur that it may readily acquire too much preponderance and confine the action of private judgment within narrower limits than are suited either to the greatness or the happiness of the human race. In the principle of equality I very clearly discern two tendencies; the one leading the mind of every man to untried thoughts, the other inclined to prohibit him from thinking at all. And I perceive how, under the dominion of certain laws, democracy would extinguish that liberty of mind to which a democratic social condition is favourable; so that, after having broken all the bondage once imposed on it by ranks or by men, the human mind would be closely fettered to the general will of the greatest number.

Tocqueville found that in his time the most absolute monarchs in Europe were unable to prevent certain heretical notions from circulating through their dominions and even in their courts:

Such is not the case in America; as long as the majority is still undecided, discussion is carried on; but as soon as its decision is irrevocably pronounced, a submissive silence is observed, and the friends, as well as the opponents, of the measure unite in assenting to its propriety. The reason of this is perfectly clear: no monarch is so absolute as to combine all the powers of society in his own hands, and to conquer all opposition with the energy of a majority which is invested with the right of making and of executing the laws. . . .

I know no country in which there is so little true independence of mind and freedom of discussion as in America. In any constitutional state in Europe every sort of religious and political theory may be advocated and propagated abroad; for there is no country in Europe so subdued by any single authority as not to contain citizens who are ready to protect the man who raises his voice in the cause of truth from the consequences of his hardihood. If he is unfortunate enough to live under an absolute government, the people is upon his side; if he inhabits a free country, he may find a shelter behind the authority of the throne, if he require one. The aristocratic part of society supports him in some countries and the

democracy in others. But in a nation where democratic institutions exist, organized like those of the United States, there is but one sole authority, one single element of strength and of success, with nothing beyond it.

While I do believe that Tocqueville was exaggerating the case of the United States in 1835, he pointed to the heart of the problem of majority tyranny over the soul. It is a problem that has grown still more acute in our own age, an age of mass communications and the mass man; for now the tyranny of the majority can be spread uniformly over the surface of a great nation otherwise well suited by size and diversity to a multiplicity of opinions, and it can be to some degree forged and manipulated from a few centers. If there were any horrors in that spontaneous, grass-roots variety of popular tyranny, as Tocqueville saw it, they must be greatly compounded by the artificial and centralized means of manipulation that the communications technology of our time has made possible.

But has there been substantial historical evidence in the development of American higher education for the validity of Tocqueville's fear of mass tyranny? I believe there is certainly enough evidence to warrant a reconsideration of our views of the relation between democracy and university culture. I propose to argue that while populist democracy has been on the side of many educational improvements and reforms, it has often been aligned as sharply with forces tending to constrain freedom in higher education and to lower its devotion to intellectual goals.

DEMOCRACY AND HIGHER EDUCATION

There may have been some popular upsurges in our history that have been auspicious for intellectualism in general, and for higher education in particular; but the popular movements that have been notable for their failure to understand the place of learning in our culture, or even on occasion for their hostility to it, are quite numerous. One of the first, the Great Awakening of the mid-eighteenth century, was notable for its hostility to a free and liberal-minded theological education such as was emerging in the older colleges; and while the Awakening must be in the end credited for enlarging the number of colleges, the goal sought at first in these en-

terprises was not an enhancement of the sphere of free learning but simply the creation of schools that would teach the right brand of theology. Jeffersonian democracy was not, on the whole, what I call populistic—at least not in its leadership. Its most constructive work in education, the founding of a liberal university in Virginia, was the work of aristocratic leadership. Jacksonian democracy, whatever its benefits in other areas, was identified with a widespread deterioration in the standards of professional education, masquerading under the ideology that easier access to these privileged areas of life must be made available to the people.

The founding of early state universities was badly hampered by popular hostility to advanced education that was held to be of use chiefly to the aristocrats, who, in fact, usually provided the basic impetus to the cultivation of the higher learning, whether in state-founded or private institutions. The movement that destroyed the old classical curriculum and made American universities, especially our state universities, the nurseries of all kinds of subintellectual practical skills of less than university grade was in its impetus very largely a popular movement; and while many of the consequences of that movement must be set to its credit as compensations, the undercurrent of vocationalism and anti-intellectualism was undeniable. Our history books tell us—to come toward our own time—that during the Populist-Bryan period the university professors who failed to accept the gold-standard economics of the well-to-do classes were often victims of outrageous interference; they do not usually trouble to tell us that when the Populists captured Kansas they raised hob with the University of Kansas in much the same way that they complained of so bitterly when the shoe was on the other foot. One of the most genuinely popular, and I believe democratic, political leaders in our history was William Jennings Bryan; and the sort of respect he showed for science and academic freedom is familiar to you all. His concept of the rights of the dissenting teacher reduces to his famous comment: "A man cannot demand a salary for saying what his employers do not want said."

My aim in stressing these facts is not to cast discredit upon popular democracy, whose merit in our whole scheme of things must be weighed by taking into account all its achievements as well as its deficiencies; I am simply trying to suggest that many of us have in the past made a mystique of the masses and have tended too

much to attribute all the villainy in our world to the machinations of vested interests. I find it rather suggestive that the sole ruling group in our history that could be called a vested intellectual interest of any considerable power—I refer, of course, to the early Puritan clergy—has suffered the fate of being scandalously libelled by our “liberal” historians who have written in the tradition of V. L. Parrington.

Why this persistent tension between popular democracy and free higher learning? Obviously it is to some degree an aspect of social striving: a college education is a privilege that has not been open to all. While it can open up otherwise unavailable opportunities to the children of the less favored classes, it can also confirm the privileges of the upper classes by adding to those social, political, and economic advantages which are theirs by birth and family, the advantages of a superior education. Much of the early opposition to state universities was based precisely upon this argument. Why tax the poor, it was repeatedly asked, to educate the sons of the rich? No doubt there is such an element of resentment on the part of the lower classes for the privileges and attainments of the upper classes. But this, to my mind, will not get us very far in explaining why the United States in particular has been a happy hunting ground for anti-intellectualism. Class divisions exist in all western societies. Moreover, of all western nations, the United States has given by far the greatest proportion of its total population an opportunity to have a college education. In our more than 1700 colleges, for instance, we offer higher education, or a reasonable facsimile thereof, to about ten times as large a portion of our population as is done in the British Isles. Moreover, while we have always had our class stratification, class lines have been less sharp in the United States, and mobility between classes somewhat easier, than in European countries. By the showing of these facts, the United States should, in accordance with the class envy theory, have much less resentment of higher education as a source of privilege than any other country on the globe.

The evidence is all to the contrary, and this is enough to give us pause. It remains to be explained why, in a culture that seems to value education very highly, that has provided an enormous apparatus for the collegiate education of its youth, the genuine intellectual content of higher education is so little esteemed, why the teacher in general and the college professor in particular has so

much less social status than he does almost anywhere else. I believe that the problem of status is, indeed, quite crucial, but that the situation cannot be explained in terms of broad assertions about the envy of manual for intellectual labor, the poor for the well-to-do, or the middle classes for the leisure classes. We must look to some of the unique factors of American historical development for our answers.

From the beginning the American people were confronted with rich resources, an immense task of continental settlement, and a shortage of labor. Their culture thus came to set a premium on practical achievement, the manipulation of material reality, and quick decision. It did not encourage reflection or a respect for the ultimate and irreducible disagreements of life. On the contrary, it suggested that it was to everyone's interest to arrive at a quick consensus, general enough to get the work done, that any disagreement on details was, in the light of the rich potentialities of organized work, unimportant. The American still sets a very high premium on such a consensus; he implicitly approaches broad intellectual and philosophical problems with that model of prompt decision in mind. "What can we agree on?" he wants to know. The wonderful persistence of irreducible differences of opinion, of the plurality of human dreams and perspectives, the exchange or contemplation of differences as an exercise in mutual understanding—all these are likely to be dark mysteries to him. He makes an ideology of normality; he asks not "What am I?" but "What is it customary and proper to be around here?" He *thinks* he is an individualist because he does truly and genuinely resent any rude coercive efforts to make him conform, but he cannot realize that he spends half his time trying to figure out how he can conform "spontaneously." One of the most appalling things in American life is the failure of those who prate most about individualism to develop any understanding of individuality. The loudest hosannas to individualism are sung by grim, regimented choruses.

The effects of our chronic shortage of labor have also struck quite directly at the teaching profession from grammar schools to graduate schools. Our historic abundance of land and other resources has continually beckoned to the inadequate resources of our labor power. The consequences of this for other areas of life than education have often been noted. Our agriculture, for instance, was dedicated from the outset to extensive and wasteful cultivation and

rapid mechanization rather than to intensive and careful cultivation and farming as a settled way of life. Too little has been said about a similar trend in our educational history. I think we have cultivated man wastefully and mechanically too. The teaching of our young, for instance, has been all too regularly left over to those whose imaginations and energies were not absorbed—or not yet absorbed—in the more exciting and lucrative life of physical and economic conquest, or to those who for one reason or another were altogether incapable of entering upon it. Ichabod Crane was, I suppose, the archetype of the American schoolmaster—the timid misfit, the amiable failure, the man who was scared out of town; and when Brom Bones chased him that terrible night through Sleepy Hollow and frightened him almost to death with a pumpkin, he was passing upon him the characteristic comment of the American philistine upon the American teacher. If the teacher was not Ichabod Crane, then it was the lonely spinster, driven by desperation to take up teaching when all else failed. If not the spinster, it was the young man who was merely marking time, supporting himself before launching upon a more permanent career in business or some really serious profession. “The men teachers,” wrote an observer of early Massachusetts schools—mind you, even Massachusetts schools—

may be divided into three classes: (1) Those who think teaching is easier and possibly a little more remunerative than common labor. (2) Those who are acquiring, or have acquired, a good education, and who take up teaching as a temporary employment, either to earn money for pressing necessities or to give themselves time to choose deliberately a regular profession. (3) Those who, conscious of weakness, despair of distinction or even the means of subsistence by other means. . . . They are often very young, they are constantly changing their employment, and consequently can have but little experience; and what is worse than all, they have never had any direct preparation for their profession. . . . No standard of attainments is fixed . . . so that any one *keeps school*, which is a very different thing from *teaching school*, who wishes to do it, and can persuade by herself or her friends, a small district to employ her. And this is not a very difficult matter, especially when the remuneration for the employment is so very trifling. . . . If a young man be moral enough to keep out of State prison, he will find no difficulty in getting approbation for a schoolmaster.

An exaggeration? Possibly. But in 1930-31, even after much had been done to improve standards of teacher training in the United States, the National Survey of the Education of Teachers showed that American teacher education, although only slightly inferior to that of England, was drastically inferior to that of France, Germany, and the Scandinavian countries. The teacher of a high school in the continental countries was found to be a much superior person, attracted by the relatively high social position, higher salaries, and advanced professional morale. And while I have been speaking here of the teaching profession below the university grade, most of what I have said will apply almost as well to American colleges down at least to the last three decades of the nineteenth century.

Let us look for a moment at those old colleges and the situation of their faculties. One of the first things that any observer of American higher education is struck by is the fact that the American professoriat is the only profession in the United States that is governed by laymen. Outside the continent of North America university faculties are nowhere governed, as they are here, by lay boards of trustees. Of course it is not easy to say whether the American professor lacks status because he is not self-governing or whether he has failed to get self-government in part because he lacks status. Genetically, however, it is not too difficult to explain how the curse of absentee government came to afflict American education. American colleges were called into existence before the community had the full means to support them amply, and indeed before there was a body of learned men professionally given to teaching. The great independent, self-governing universities of the middle ages, which established the pattern for early modern university government, came into existence only where there were well-established bodies of students and masters; they took their political form from the guild model of corporate self-control and the church's model of independence from the power of the state. The American colleges were founded in a Protestant milieu, which, no longer accepting the principles of hierarchy and corporate independence, had introduced lay government of churches. From this to lay government of colleges was a natural step, made the more natural by the fact that the greater part of the teaching personnel in early American colleges, for over a century and a half, consisted of young tutors, recent graduates, who were merely waiting and studying preparatory to entering the ministry. These men

usually had no permanent interest in teaching as a profession, no permanent stake in its welfare. And they were considered by the philanthropic non-teachers who founded the colleges to be too young and too transient to be entrusted with the task of governing the colleges and managing their resources. Hence governmental powers were kept in the hands of trustees. The only working member of the college who held the full stature of a master of university learning was the president who, in the absence of the trustees, took over a larger and larger share of the task of determining college policy. Hence to this day the only person in the American community who enjoys a measure of prestige and respect comparable to that enjoyed by the university professor in most countries of Europe is our college or university president. Needless to say, with the development of the modern university, a great deal of the power to govern academic affairs has informally passed into the hands of faculties. But in almost all cases, such powers are delegated and may be legally retaken on any issue at any time by trustees. While few American university professors would argue for full self-government at this date, the legal inability of the American academic community to govern itself in matters bearing on academic freedom and tenure is a major disability in its struggle against the external forces of anti-intellectualism.

It may also be said in passing that the historic lack of prestige within the American academic community has tended to feed on itself. I am sure that no man anywhere whose primary desire is for a large share of the material goods of life enters the teaching profession with the idea that it will supply them with any abundance. He enters it because of other inducements: because he wants to pursue knowledge, because he values leisure (he will be lucky if he gets it), because he likes the idea of living in an academic community, or because of the prestige of the office. But American academic life, having so little prestige to offer, has failed to recruit a very large percentage of its professorial personnel from the upper classes, as does the professoriat in England or on the continent. The American college professor is characteristically drawn from the lower middle classes. I hope you will not imagine that I am being snobbish when I argue that this has been a signal disadvantage both to the freedom and the intellectualism of the academic community. Logan Wilson, in his study of *The Academic Man* in the United States, has pointed out that the recruit from the

lower middle classes often comes from a background of cultural poverty in which, of necessity, the view taken of most things has to be profoundly affected by their material efficacy. I should also add that a man who comes from a well-established family with secure connections, and has perhaps in addition some personal resources to draw on, can confront the problems of free expression with far greater boldness than the man who feels that he must cling to his academic job at all costs. I have been impressed, in studying the development of a certain measure of liberalism in the American colleges of the eighteenth century, by the important role played by men who came to academic life from secure positions of social prestige, either in great commercial families or the ministry. One of the boldest men in early academic life was Professor John Winthrop, the great Harvard astronomer, and no little part of his boldness rested upon the security derived from the fact that he was, after all, a Winthrop in Massachusetts.

The low prestige of the professor in America was matched by the low prestige of the college itself. At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, as the American population broke through the Allegheny mountains and began to spread across the continent, a process of educational fragmentation began which still profoundly afflicts our educational system. Every sect of Protestants wanted to have a little college to service every part of a great country. Localities thought that a community college would be good for local development. Parents welcomed the opportunity to educate their sons near at home in small schools whose annual tuition was often not much larger than the cost of transportation to a distant and perhaps more formidable seat of learning. They were advised, too, that the country college was socially democratic and that it protected their offspring from the corrupting atmosphere of great cities. This passion for breaking up the educational system into small units destroyed much of the potential strength and prestige of the old college. Where English colleges had clustered at a few university centers, American colleges were strewn across three thousand miles of continent. Innumerable colleges failed because they were so flimsily launched. Many that survived were much too tiny to maintain decent teaching staffs and adequate educational standards. It became a commonplace among serious educators before the Civil War that the American college was not, in the terms of international educational standards, a col-

lege at all, but a closer equivalent to the German gymnasium, the French lycée, the English public school.

After a time the old college became the butt of a great deal of criticism. It was, of course, devoted chiefly to the inherited classical curriculum, featuring Latin, Greek, and mathematics. This kind of schooling was increasingly held to be unadapted to the needs of American business, technology, and agriculture. It was held, and quite correctly, to be too limited and rigid to be adequate to the growing fund of human knowledge. Between the educational reformers, who were dissatisfied with the low level of work that the existing colleges were unable to transcend, and the practical reformers, who wanted to make American higher education work for the community in a clearer and more easily definable way, a curiously mixed transformation was finally effected in the last half of the nineteenth century. Universities, both state and private, were at last reared on adequate foundations; graduate and professional schools were created; schools of agriculture and engineering were founded; the curriculum was broadened; and the elective system was introduced.

Within only a few decades a curriculum system that had been too tight and too rigid was made too loose and too sprawling. All kinds of practical skills that had neither professional nor intellectual stature—no matter how necessary they might be to the community—were taught, or presumed to be taught, at universities. The president of a great state university was proud to say: "The state universities hold that there is no intellectual service too undignified for them to perform." Vast numbers of students without notable intellectual interests or skills flocked to the colleges and universities, availed themselves freely of the multitude of elective courses with little or no intellectual content, and passed out into the world with padded degrees. Much of the information thus inculcated may be thought to have no place in any system of formal education. A still larger part belongs to purely technical and mechanical education of the sort that can be properly taught in formal education but is not elsewhere considered proper to a university—the sort of thing that on the continent of Europe is to be found among the offerings of the German *technische Hochschule* and its many counterparts in other countries.

Now all this has taken place at serious cost to intellectualism. It is possible, of course, to argue that the professor of some field of

pure learning is not interfered with in the pursuit of his work simply because his colleague in the school of agriculture is busy teaching farmers how to raise healthy pigs. Theoretically, no; but those who are familiar with the problems of university administration and finance know that these things have a way of pulling against or tripping over each other; and that when all kinds of skills of various levels are jumbled together and taught in one institution, the hierarchy of values that places intellectual accomplishment at the top, as one would expect to do in a university, is somehow broken and destroyed. Thus the universities, that we might have expected to stand as solid barriers against the undercurrents of American anti-intellectualism, have actually intensified the push of the stream. How they could have resisted it, I do not honestly know. For one thing, our system of higher education is, unlike all the other systems in the world, a system of mass education, that today enrolls about 3,000,000 people. In a way, that is a preposterous figure, and I suppose it is altogether unreasonable to expect that students in such numbers will all get anything that could be called a common liberal education. All kinds of things pass for a college education in this country and will no doubt continue to do so for a long time to come. The difficulty is that we now have an educational system which rarely produces educators who will themselves dare to defend an education wholeheartedly directed to the goal of increasing intellectual power. The famous report of the President's Commission on Higher Education published in 1948—a report prepared by a representative group of American educators and laymen interested in education—had this to say on the subject:

We shall be denying educational opportunity to many young people as long as we maintain the present orientation of higher education toward verbal skills and intellectual interest. Many young people have abilities of a different kind, and they cannot receive "education commensurate with their native capacities" in colleges and universities that recognize only one kind of educable intelligence.

Traditionally the colleges have sifted out as their special clientele persons possessing verbal aptitudes and a capacity for grasping abstractions. But many other aptitudes—such as social sensitivity and versatility, artistic ability, motor skill and dexterity, and me-

chanical aptitude and ingenuity—also should be cultivated in a society depending, as ours does, on the minute division of labor and at the same time upon the orchestration of an enormous variety of talents.

I can think of no more shameful capitulation than this to the canons of anti-intellectualism: a group of educators urging that our de-intellectualized colleges become still more de-intellectualized by giving up their alleged preoccupation with “verbal aptitudes” and “a capacity for grasping abstractions”—that is, the power to think and to express thought—for a motley batch of skills which, however valuable, one does not have to go to college to learn; for “social sensitivity” that no doubt includes ballroom dancing and parlor games; for “motor skill and dexterity” that must clearly mean athletics if it does not mean the ability to wash dishes without dropping them; and for “mechanical aptitude and ingenuity” that may very well mean the ability to drive and repair an automobile. Worthy skills every single one of them, and no doubt a necessary part of our life; but why they have to be acquired in something that calls itself a college or university the Commission, whose business was supposed to be with *higher* education, did not take the trouble to explain. No doubt its members did not feel themselves to be on the defensive, for they were expressing the dominant point of view in American society.

At the top of our educational system this attitude threatens to weaken whatever intellectualism we have. At lower levels, in our grammar and high schools, it threatens to wipe out literacy altogether in the name of “progressive education” or education for “life adjustment.” If you think I exaggerate, listen to the principal of a junior high school in Urbana, Illinois, speaking to a meeting of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals:

Through the years we’ve built a sort of halo around reading, writing, and arithmetic. We’ve said they were for everybody . . . rich and poor, brilliant and not-so-mentally endowed, ones who liked them and those who failed to go for them. Teacher has said that these were something “everyone should learn.” The principal has remarked, “All educated people know how to write, spell, and read.” When some child declared a dislike for a sacred subject, he was warned that, if he failed to master it, he would grow up to be a so-and-so.

The Three R's for All Children and All Children for the Three R's! That was it.

We've made some progress in getting rid of that slogan. But every now and then some mother with a Phi Beta Kappa award or some employer who has hired a girl who can't spell stirs up a fuss about the schools . . . and ground is lost. . . .

When we come to the realization that not every child has to read, figure, write, and spell . . . that many of them either cannot or will not master these chores . . . then we shall be on the road to improving the junior high curriculum.

Between this day and that a lot of selling must take place. But it's coming. We shall some day accept the thought that it is just as illogical to assume that every boy must be able to read as it is that each one must be able to perform on a violin, that it is no more reasonable to require that each girl shall spell well than it is that each one shall bake a good cherry pie. . . .

When adults finally realize that fact, everyone will be happier . . . and schools will be nicer places in which to live. . . .

Of course this speaker, unlike the President's Commission, does not seem to be entirely in harmony with the prevailing sentiments of the country—at least, not yet; for it is clear that he thinks himself to be a visionary whose notions are considerably in advance of the times but whose high ideals for the future of illiteracy will some fine day be realized. I must ask you, however, to try to envisage the minds of a generation of young Americans who receive their lower education under men of this stamp and their higher education under a regime fully conforming to the President's Commission's disdain for verbal aptitudes and abstractions.

What is it, I think we may properly ask, that brings our nation's educators to such depressing disavowals of the fundamentally intellectual purposes of education? Much the same thing, I believe, that has them cringing before the onslaughts of politicians who are beyond the pale of moral decency—and that is the lack of a self-confident dedication to the life of the mind. What the root of that failure of self-confidence is, no one really knows; but I venture to suggest that it has a great deal to do with our false piety for populist democracy, our sense of guilt at daring to suggest that there is anything wrong with the mob, even when a large part of it has obviously been whipped up by demagogues to a state of frantic

suspicion of everything it does not care to understand. I think it would help us all morally, even if it would do nothing else, to face the fact that the very idea of intellectualism implies an elite of some kind—not, to be sure, a ruthless elite with special privileges or powers, but simply a group of people who have interests not shared by everyone in the community and whose very special interest is in freedom. Not everyone really wants to belong to that elite. But the primary fact is that this elite must maintain a certain spiritual autonomy in defining its own standards. I am not optimistic enough to believe that in any calculable future the rest of society can be brought to recognize that intellectuals have their own rights and interests, not special rights or privileged interests, but of the same sort that any other group has. What the intellectual community can do is what any group of sensible people will do whose values are under attack—and that is not to try to find some plausible reason for abandoning those values because they are not shared by the majority; and not to try to convince themselves that they really agree with the majority after all—but to show cohesion and firmness under fire, until the point has been reached when it is no longer profitable to encroach upon them.

This world will never be governed by intellectuals—it may rest assured. But *we* must be assured, too, that intellectuals will not be altogether governed by this world, that they maintain their piety, their long-standing allegiance to the world of spiritual values to which they should belong. Otherwise there will be no intellectuals, at least not above ground. And societies in which the intellectuals have been driven underground, as we have had occasion to see in our own time, are societies in which even the anti-intellectuals are unhappy.

Blueprint for a Silver Age:

Notes On a Visit To America

CYRIL CONNOLLY

THURSDAY, 28 NOVEMBER. Nantucket light. In cold, sunny afternoon the bright red lightship bobbing to starboard is the first sign that our ten-day prep-school voyage is coming to an end; we are as happy as the discoverers of Virginia in 1584. "We found shoal water, where we smelt so sweet and so strong a smell, as if we had been in the midst of some delicate garden abounding with all kind of odoriferous flowers, by which we were assured that the land could not be far distant." No more dull dormitory life, eight to a cabin, no hurried monotonous meals (without drink, for our ship, the *Highland Governess*, is dry), no more scrambling for chairs, or searching for conversation, no more the pitching and tossing of the battered old bureaucrappy troopship over the endless empty heaving dishwater of the autumn Atlantic. Tomorrow our personalities will be handed back to us. . . .

To bed excited, with lights and lighthouses visible, and in the distance the Long Island beaches. All the voyage an immense euphoria about U. S. A., Baedeker alternating with Baudelaire: prospect of seeing California and far Southwest! Europe seems infinitely remote; England like a week-end cottage which one has abandoned with all the washing-up undone. I understand the New World motif. Actuality, the ideal of inhabiting a continuous present.

FRIDAY. Up at six to see New York in the darkness—sunrise, the Narrows, the first houses, the ferries, "*l'aurore rose et verte*," the Statue of Liberty, skyscrapers in fog, general impression much more European than I had expected. Interminable wait before going ashore during which the passengers all look exactly as they did on the first day—"their sweating selves, but worse." Off about 12:30, then through customs and in taxi to hotel; my driver asks—and gets—six dollars. Tony and Wystan are there and we go off to

lunch to a restaurant of my choice, exotic and rather bad; but Third Avenue, red and raffish, has a fascinating Continental charm. Auden warns us of the perils of the big city, he seems obsessed with hold-ups, the proper use of the subway system, and jumping to it at the traffic lights; his welcome is like that of the town mouse to the country mouse in the Disney film. I discover only later that his battle with the traffic lights is a kind of personal obsession with the machine age, a challenge to his desire to pass efficiently in the crowd. Hugging our wallets tightly and plunging over the crossings we proceed in short rushes to the Holliday bookshop, an oasis where carefully chosen books are sold like hand-made cushions; here Wystan introduces the two new mice and leaves us, with instructions on how to take the subway back.

That evening an elaborate dinner with Peter at Voisin's, much-anticipated on the *Highland Governess* (disappointing except for avocado pears). The new mice compare notes. Peter says the U. S. A. is a place where only the very rich can be the least different from anyone else, but where the poor are not crushed and stunted (as in England, where the upper class is twice as tall as the lower). Here, he said, the poor are picturesque and often beautiful—the true creators of the American dream—and that there was also great poetry about the country when one traveled over it. On the other hand it was awful seeing nothing but copies—of buildings, houses, furniture, pictures—and where the originals were in private hands they gave no intimacy. I found the skyscrapers depressing, a huge black ferro-concrete architecture of necessity shutting out the light from the treeless streets

Whose constant care is not to please
But to remind of our, and Adam's curse
And that, to be restored, our sickness must grow worse.

SATURDAY. To the Lafayette after a stroll round delicious Washington Square, which in the morning sun considerably revives me from the gloomy thoughts of the night before, sleepless beside the sizzling radiator. Greenwich Village, which reminds me more and more of Soho, is still cheap, and apparently not quite spoilt, "the one place in New York where different income groups are still mixed up, and where the queers and misfits from the Middle West can all find sanctuary."

"There is an immense cleavage here," says Tony at lunch, "be-

tween the intellectuals and everyone else, who are really quite uninterested in books, though they like to keep up with the best sellers. Intellectuals thus have to join political movements or attach themselves to causes or become dons, for they cannot otherwise survive. They become overserious, 'culture' requires one hundred per cent efficiency, it is a whole-time business, everyone becomes extremely bellicose and erudite; publishers work so hard that even they have no time for pleasure, and without pleasures the intellectual becomes uncivilized, a pedantic variation of the business man."

After lunch to the top of Rockefeller Center. Asked the bald elevator boy on the last lap why we were told to face outward. He made no reply at first, then broke down into helpless laughter; the only words to come from him were, "It's all so silly"—mountain sickness, perhaps. The view was the first beautiful thing I had seen in New York, where one can go for weeks without the knowledge of being surrounded by water. If one need never descend below the fortieth floor New York would seem the most beautiful city in the world, its skies and cloudscapes are tremendous, its Southern latitude is revealed only in its light (for vegetation and architecture are strictly Northern); here one can take in the Hudson, the East River, the midtown and downtown colonies of skyscrapers, Central Park and the magnificent new bridges and curving arterial highways, and watch here the evening miracle, the lights going on over all these frowning termitaries against a sky of royal-blue velvet only to be paralleled in Lisbon or Palermo. A Southern city, with a Southern pullulation of life, yet with a Northern winter imposing a control; the whole Nordic energy and sanity of living crisply enforcing its authority for three of the four seasons on the violet-airy babel of tongues and races; this tension gives New York its unique concentration and makes it the supreme metropolis of the present.

Dinner with Auden's friend C. At last the luxury of poverty; stairs, no lift, leaking arm-chairs, a bed-sitting-room with bath-kitchenette curtained off, guests with European teeth (who was it said that Americans have no faces?), a gramophone library, untidy books not preserved in cardboard coffins, an incompetent gas stove—an exquisite dinner cooked and served by C. Clam juice mixed with chicken broth, chops with a sauce and lima beans, liederkranz cheese and pumpernickel, dry Californian wine. Argument afterward about poetry interspersed with selections from Wsytan's fa-

vorite operas. They are many. Much conversation about the U. S., and W. continues to propound his point of view. Though very pro-British (his bedside bible remains a work on the mineralogy of the Lake District compiled by a friend of his father's), he reverts always to the same argument: that a writer needs complete anonymity, he must break away from the European literary "happy family" with its family love and jokes and jealousies and he must reconsider all the family values. Possibly he could do this in any large impersonal society, but only in America is it so easy for the anonymous immigrant to make money. He is, of course, extremely lonely, but then so is every American; "you have no idea," he says, "how lonely even the married are." I make the inevitable point that surely it is important to live in attractive surroundings, and in New York (where all want to live) only the rich can afford them. Why live an exile in a black slum, looking out on a fire-escape, in a city which is intolerable in winter and summer, when for the same money one might flourish in Regent's Park or on the Ile Saint Louis? But then, I imagine Auden replying, you would at once have the family all about you, and he concentrates on my return journey to Washington Square. Walking back from the subway station at two in the morning I find a second-hand bookstore open all night in West Eighth Street, I go in and buy more Cummings; to purchase early works of Cummings in the small hours, in the heart of

the little barbarous Greenwich perfumed fake

and march home with them in the frosty night, while the tugs hoot and central heating plants under the long black street puff away through its many manholes like geysers on the moon, that is to enjoy that anonymous urban civilization that Auden has chosen, and of which Baudelaire dreamed and despaired.

Long past diary-keeping now, I am slave of telephone and engagement book. Europe is a dream, and Auden's anonymity equally remote. We are plunged in New York literary life and try to analyze the swirl and eddy of that vigorous, intricate, cordial group of groupings. America is not Europe, in neither its places nor its people nor its values, and it is only by making the most desperate adjustment that a true European writer can remain himself here. Thus in the United States literature is fighting a losing battle against the Book Business which we can hardly comprehend. The crucial factor is the high cost of book production, which renders the printing of

small editions (under 10,000) uneconomic; the tendency is therefore to go all out for the best seller and, with a constant eye on Hollywood, to spend immense sums on publicity to bring about one of these jackpots. But even without Hollywood there are large sums to be made from book-of-the-month clubs, cheap pulp editions, serial rights, and so the result of this pressure is a transformation of the literary scene into mass production. The American public are cajoled into reading the book of the month, and only the book of the month, and for that month only. Last year's book is as unfashionable as last year's car.

The standard of living among publishers is also ridiculously high; huge offices among skyscrapers employ armies of bright and competitive young men. I know of one whose lawyers forbade him to start a business of his own as his capital was but a hundred thousand dollars. The hunt for young authors who, while maintaining a prestige value (with a rôle for Ingrid Bergman), may yet somehow win the coveted jackpot, is feverish and incessant. Last year's authors (most of the names that have just reached England) are pushed aside and this year's—the novelist Jean Stafford, her poet husband Robert Lowell, or the dark horse, Truman Capote—are invariably mentioned. They may be quite unread, but their names, like a new issue on the market, are constantly on the lips of those in the know. "Get Capote"—at this minute the words are resounding on many a sixtieth floor, and "get him" of course means make him and break him, smother him with laurels and then vent on him the obscure hatred inherent in the notion of another's superiority.

"In Ngoio, a province of the ancient kingdom of the Congo," Frazer relates, "the rule obtains that the chief who assumes the cap of sovereignty is always killed on the night after his coronation." But in civilized Ngoio the throne is generally vacant. America is the one country (greatly to its credit) where an author can still make a fortune for life from one book; it is also the country where everyone is obsessed with that idea, where publishers live like stock-brokers, and where authors, like film stars, are condemned to meditate from minute to minute on last year's income tax, next week's publicity. It is all part of the American tragedy—that, in the one remaining country where necessities are cheap, where a room and food and wine and clothes and cigarettes and travel are within everyone's reach, to be poor is still disgraceful.

The American way of life is one of the most effective the world

has known, but about the end of life Americans are more in the dark than any people since the Gauls of Tacitus. What is the American way?

It may be summed up as a creed which is partly the effect of climate, partly of vitamins and calories, partly of pioneer experiences, partly of the inherited memory of what was bad in Europe. The American way assumes a world without God, yet a world in which happiness is obtainable, but obtainable only through a constant exertion of the will toward a practical goal and of the mind toward solution of present problems. Riches and success are the outward signs that this goal is being attained, that the human organism is making full use of its energy and faculties; a whispering of wives, expert at farewell (three is the lucky number), indicates that the proper stages on the journey are being reached, and handsome, healthy, indifferent children are present to carry on when the wage-earner passes over; any moments of disquieting leisure are rendered innocuous by extroverted social activities with colleagues of similar status and their families, or sent flying by alcohol. The esteem of society is enormously important and can only be held by a decent, kindly, and acquisitive way of living. Courage, humor, hard work, and the affectionate co-operation of uncles and cousins make endurable the darker side: sickness, insolvency, hangovers, death, and mother.

Seldom has a more harmless or profitable philosophy of life been evolved, a more resolute opponent of art, remorse, and introspection, or one further removed from the futile European speculation about the Soul or the Past, the moping about sin and death, the clinging to moribund methods, ideals, relationships, the pangs of ennui. If one were but permitted to take human beings at their own valuation, the American way would seem the most desirable solution to our predicament, for it offers a full life built round the notions of freedom, independence, hard work, and the family; the personality without a thought stoically working itself out through action.

But the end? What is old age in America? After sixty, where do old people vanish? Why are the bustling battalions of unwanted Moms so elegantly pathetic? And the rich who have pocketed their winnings, why are they so glum? The rich in America are very aware of civilization, at the head of one of the most conscientious societies which the world has seen, and still largely owners of the

means of production; yet in some way they appear grimly on the defensive. Public opinion is not behind this solemn patriciate as it is behind the boisterous and rising class. Cities like Boston and Philadelphia, which contain large bodies of rich rentiers living on inherited wealth but losing access to political power, are going off the boil, becoming august backwaters. Of all the Eastern cities only New York and perhaps Washington are on the upgrade, while the evolutionary dynamism of the "way" continues to expand in California and the far Northwest. The age of the Morgans, the Vanderbilts, the Mellons is over; the rich can do nothing with their money but give it away, and try to finance that artistic renaissance which their grandfathers by their exclusive cult of gold bricks and museum pieces did so much to destroy.

And what is this American "way," in reality, but forty years' drudgery in an office while the divorced wives play bridge together and the children drift apart? What is the getting of money but a constant source of ulcers and anxiety, till apoplexy or heart failure clamp down? And why does alcohol, which should oil the wheels of intercourse, so flood and clog them that there is a drunk in each so respectable family? And why the immense rush to psychiatry, the high rate of madness and suicide? Why, after midnight, do so many Americans fight or weep? Grown up while still a child, middle-aged at thirty, a boy only among his cronies of the golf course or the lunch club, coffined or cremated at about sixty-three, the American business male with his forceful, friendly, unlined face carries within him a dustbowl of despair which renders him far more endearing and closer to Europe than his dutiful efforts to conceal it. Action, often violent and destructive, not contemplation, is his remedy, but his awareness of the tragic human predicament goes very deep.

This leads us on to one of the finest traits in American character. At a time when the American way, backed by American resources, has made the country into the greatest power the world has known, there has never been more doubting and questioning of the purpose of the American process; the higher up one goes the more searching becomes this self-criticism, the deeper the thirst for a valid mystique of humanity. Those who rule America, who formulate its foreign policy and form its opinion, are enormously conscious of their responsibility and of the total inadequacy of the crude material philosophy of life in which they grew up. The bloody-minded,

the smug, the imperialist, the fascist, are in a minority. Seldom, in fact, has an unwilling world been forced to tolerate, through its own folly, a more unwilling master.

The New York scene reveals many traces of this unrest. Insecurity reigns. Almost everyone hates his job. Psychiatrists of all schools are as common as monks in the Thebaid. "Who is your analyst?" will disarm any interviewer; books on how to be happy, how to attain peace of mind, how to win friends and influence people, how to breathe, how to achieve a cheap sentimental humanism at other people's expense, how to become a Chinaman like Lin Yutang and make a lot of money, how to be a B'hai or breed chickens (*The Ego and I*) all sell in millions. Religious houses of retreat merge imperceptibly into disintoxication clinics and private mental homes for the victims of traffic lights and nervous breakdowns. "Alcoholics Anonymous" slink like house detectives around the literary cocktail parties.

A most interesting phenomenon is the state of mind apparent in *Time*, *Life*, the *New Yorker*, and similar magazines. Thus *Life*, with its enormous circulation, comes out with excellently written leading articles on the dearth of tragedy in American literature or the meaning of suffering, and a closer acquaintance reveals them to be staffed by some of the most interesting and sensitive minds in that insensitive city.

It is easy to make fun of these three papers, but in fact they are not funny. Although they have very large circulations indeed, they only just miss being completely honorable and serious journals, in fact "highbrow." Hence the particular nemesis, ordeal by shiny paper, of those who manage them; they work very hard, and deliver almost the best work of which they are capable. But the gap is never quite closed between the public and the highbrow writer, because the American organism is not quite healthy. I mention this at some length because it indicates how very nearly New York has achieved the ideal of a humanist society, where the best of which an artist is capable is desired by the greatest number. Thurber's drawings, Hersey's *Hiroshima*, the essays of Edmund Wilson or Mary MacCarthy, *Time's* anonymous reviews, show that occasionally the gap is closed; when it is closed permanently the dream will be near fulfillment.

But these anxiety-forming predicaments (*Time-stomach* is a common trouble) are for those who live in New York and have

to earn their living. To the visiting noncompetitive European all is unending delight. The shops, the bars, the women, the faces in the street, the excellent and innumerable restaurants, the glitter of Twenty-One, the old-world lethargy of the Lafayette, the hazy views of the East River or Central Park over tea in some apartment at the magic hour when the concrete icebergs suddenly flare up; the impressionist pictures in one house, the exotic trees or bamboo furniture in another, the chink of "old-fashioneds" with their little glass pestles, the divine glories—Egyptian, Etruscan, French—of the Metropolitan Museum, the felicitous contemporary assertion of the Museum of Modern Art, the snow, the sea-breezes, the late suppers with the Partisans, the reelings-home down the black steam-spitting canyons, the Christmas trees lit up beside the licorice ribbons of cars on Park Avenue, the Gotham Book Mart, the shabby cosiness of the Village, all go to form an unforgettable picture of what a city ought to be: that is, continuously insolent and alive, a place where one can buy a book or meet a friend at any hour of the day or night, where every language is spoken and xenophobia is unknown, where every purse and appetite is catered for, where every street and every quarter with the people who inhabit them are fulfilling their function, not slipping back into apathy, indifference, decay. If Paris is the setting for a romance, New York is the perfect city in which to get over one, to get over anything. Here the lost *douceur de vivre* is forgotten and the intoxication of living takes its place.

What is this intoxication? First, health. The American diet is energy-producing. Health is not just the absence of disease but a positive physical sensation. The European, his voice dropping a tone every day, finds himself growing stouter, balder, more extroverted and aggressive, conscious of a place in what is still, despite lip-service, a noisily masculine society. Then there is the sensation of belonging to a great nation in its present prosperous period of triumph. But in addition to "feeling good" the Americans are actively generous and kind, and it is this profusion of civilities which ravishes the visitor. American hosts are not only thoughtful; it is almost dangerous to express a wish before them, to such unobtrusive lengths will they go to fulfil it. American hostesses bring their ingrained perfectionism into daily living. It is a society more formal, more painstaking, more glamorous, and more charitable than our poor old bitter, battered, pennywise European equivalent—one

may pine inevitably for a whiff of honest English malice, outspokenness, and bad manners; but one should not be proud of such nostalgias—for we have largely forgotten the degree to which leisure, money, good will, and taste can still make life agreeable.

One thing alone seems to me impossible in New York—to write well. (My literary output over nine weeks amounted to a two-page letter.) Not because the whirl and pleasurable bustle of the gregarious life built around writing is so irresistible, not because it is almost impossible to find a quiet room near a tree, or to stay in of an evening, not because intelligent conversation with a kindred spirit is hard to come by (it is not), but because this glowing, blooming, stimulating material perfection overexcites the mind, causing it to precipitate into wit and conversation those ideas which might set into literature. Wit and wisecrack, not art, are the thorny flowers on this rocky island, this concrete Capri; they call the tune for which our proud new bass is lent us. “Yah,” one may say instead of “yes,” but when “fabulous,” “for Chris’ sakes,” “it stinks,” “way off the beam,” and “Bourbon over ice” roar off our lips, when one notices with distaste the Europeanism of others—it’s time for flight, for dripping plane-trees, misty mornings, the grizzling circle of hypercritical friends, the fecund London inertia where nothing stirs but the soul.

What are the alternatives? One may stay on and coarsen—many English writers do—into shapely executives or Park Avenue brandy philosophers; one can fight like Auden for privacy and isolation, or grow bitter and Fitzrovian * in the “Village atmosphere,” or one can try elsewhere. Cape Cod and Connecticut have their devotees, but these havens are the rewards of success, not its incubators. Boston, last stronghold of a leisured class, offers a select enlightenment of which a contemporary Englishman is just downright unworthy. Washington has immense charm, the streets of Georgetown with their ilexes and magnolias and little white boxes are like corners of Chelsea or Exeter, but a political nexus offers few resources to the artist who is outside the administration, and the lovely surroundings (the shores of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries form the most insidiously appealing of all American landscapes to the homesick European) are not places in which he can hope to earn a living.

* Fitzrovian—decayed Artists’ Quarter between Soho and Bloomsbury.

Let us try California. The night plane circles round La Guardia, leaves behind the icy water of the Sound and that sinister Stonehenge of economic man, the Rockefeller Center, to disappear over the Middle West. Vast rectangles of light occasionally indicate Chicago or some other well-planned city till at six in the morning we ground in the snow of Omaha. As it grows light the snowfields over the whole agricultural region of the Middle West grow more intricate, the Great Plains give way to the Bad Lands, poison ivy to poison oak, the sinuosities of the Platte Rivers to the High Plains, the mountains of Wyoming, the Continental Divide. All semblance of European structure vanishes; Salt Lake appears as a radiant lunar landscape in the wan sunshine, the Great Salt Lake desert glistening beyond it, fading into other deserts, last, into the formidable Carson Sink. It is hard to picture the immense desolation of the West in winter, the wilderness of snow over fifteen hundred miles of plateau and mountain, till suddenly, unfrozen, among the pine woods of the Rockies a blue alpine lake appears, Lake Tahoe, and beyond a great glowing explosion of orange sky, woods without snow, green hills with no trace of winter, the darker patches of citrus orchard, the line of irrigation canals, the Sacramento Valley—California and the enormous pale Pacific.

San Francisco is a city of charming people, hideous buildings, mostly erected after the earthquake in the style of 1910, with a large Chinatown in which everything is fake—except the Chinese—with a tricky humid climate (though sunny in winter), and a maddening indecision in the vegetation—which can never decide if it belongs to the North or to the South and achieves a Bourne-mouth compromise. The site is fantastically beautiful, the orange bridge, the seven hills, the white houses, the waterside suburbs across the Golden Gate give it a lovely strangeness, the sunset view from the “Top of the Mark” is unique—but the buildings lack all dignity and flavor. Yet San Francisco and its surroundings, Marin County, Berkeley, Sausalito with its three climates, San Mateo where lemon and birch tree grow together, probably represent the most attractive all-the-year-round alternative to Europe which the world can provide. If I were an escapist—that is, rather more determined to escape—I would fly from the delirium and coma of the countries I love and settle in central California. There Europe is twice as far as from New York which itself is so remote that

it becomes a kind of Europe, a delicious object of the annual holiday, yet the temperate European climate and way of life still prevail.

A hundred miles to the south is some of the loveliest country I have ever seen, the Monterey peninsula and the redwood hills of Big Sur. At Monterey the Pacific for once imitates the Mediterranean, the vast cold treacherous sail-less ocean flows in sunny, sandy coves round the pine and cypress woods of the peninsula, the enormous sea-lions bark all night off the shore. South of Carmel the wild Santa Lucia mountains with their forests of evergreen oak and holly roll southward for two hundred miles of green Dorset downs, five thousand feet high. Here the Pacific roars at the foot of inky cliffs, pouring in immense black strands of weed, whose roots bob like human heads, while out to sea the whales, drifting south in pairs, spout lazily by. On one of these cliffs surrounded by editions of Rimbaud lives Henry Miller with his wife and child. His house is a romantic shack, built by the convicts while making the road, for which he pays six dollars rent a month. A mile or so further is a hot open-air sulphur bath. Once a week the groceries come out from Carmel. There is some fog in winter, but generally it is sunny. The sea is there, the mountains, and a bathing pool in the redwood forest. Here is one writer who has solved the problem of how to live happily in America without hacking, writing unstintingly of himself and the Cosmos, decently impervious to this remote grandiose wilderness of mountain and sea.

Hollywood, Los Angeles are too well known to need description. On the whole those who have loved the Mediterranean will not be reconciled here in spite of the pot-pourri of talents and profusion of amenities, and those who really care for books can never settle down to the impermanent world of the cinema. Those who do not love the cinema have no business to come. There are exceptional cases of intellectual adaptation of which Huxley's is the most remarkable. The California climate and food creates giants but not genius, but Huxley has filled out into a kind of Apollonian majesty; he radiates both intelligence and serene goodness, and is the best possible testimony to the simple life he leads and the faith he believes in—the one English writer, I think, entirely to have benefited by his transplantation and whom one feels exquisitely refreshed by meeting. Huxley and Isherwood incidentally join hands with Auden in that all three believe (somewhat maso-

chistically) that the peculiar horrors of America—its brashness, music at meals, and racial hysteria—by being emphasized there to a degree not found in other countries, force the onlooker into a rejection of the world which might otherwise come too late.

As Auden puts it, "the anonymous countryside littered with heterogeneous *dreck* and the synonymous cities besotted with electric signs . . . without which, perhaps, the analyst and the immigrant alike would never understand by contrast the nature of the Good Place nor desire it with sufficient desperation to stand a chance of arriving."

Miller, in his *Air-Conditioned Nightmare*, writes with more desperation: "In the ten thousand miles I have traveled I have come across two cities which have each of them a little section worth a second look—I mean Charleston and New Orleans. As for the other cities, towns, and villages through which I passed I hope never to see them again. Everything that was of beauty, significance, or promise has been destroyed or buried in the avalanche of false progress. We have degenerated; we have degraded the life which we sought to establish on this continent. . . . Nowhere have I encountered such a dull, monotonous fabric of life as here in America. Here boredom reaches its peak."

Well, maybe it does, perhaps Americans have destroyed their romantic wilderness on a grander scale than our own rodent attrition at the beauties of our countryside—but I feel a change is coming. Europe invented the Industrial Revolution, fathered the pattern of American ugliness; cities like Reading or Casablanca are worse than anything in America, more shabbily complacent, less conscious of the need for reform. For ninety per cent of Europeans America represents what they would like to be. Jazz is the folk music we have now lost, Hollywood is the dream we can't have, Wall Street the fortune we will never earn, Main Street the animation and plenty which elude us. Only a small minority may criticize without envy. But in America the percentage of the dissatisfied is higher. The enthusiasm which nearly made Prohibition possible still seeks an outlet. As Europe grows more helpless the Americans are compelled to become farseeing and responsible, as Rome was forced by the long decline of Greece to produce an Augustus, a Vergil. Our impotence liberates their potentialities. Something important is about to happen, as if the wonderful *jeunesse* of America were suddenly to retain their idealism and vitality and courage

and imagination into adult life, and become the wise and good who make use of them; the old dollar values are silently crumbling, and self-criticism, experimental curiosity, sensibility, and warmth are on their way in.

For Americans change very fast. "Do they?" "Very fast and all at once," as Fitzgerald wrote, "and nothing ever changes them back."

SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING

1. With evidence from these four pieces, write an essay on the thesis "The pressures of conformity are greater than the average American thinks."
2. With evidence from your own experience, write an essay on some thesis like "The herd is stronger than the individual: the bowling club versus solitude."
3. Find a thesis in one of the following subjects, and write an essay on it: "High-school Cruelty: Ins and Outs," "The Value of Solitude," "The True and the Untrue Rebel," "The Beatnik's Code."
4. Write an essay from your own observation about the fads in slang that make last year's circle look somewhat square.
5. Write an essay patterned after Hofstadter, using his ideas where pertinent, on the subject "Education and the Curriculum at _____ (the college or university you know best)." After an introduction that establishes your thesis, present a definition of education that will then apply to the rest of your remarks about the particular curriculum.
6. Write an essay about the realities of student government (or of any kind of leadership), considering Hofstadter's reality as against the ideal Jefferson expressed in a letter of October 28, 1813, to John Adams:

. . . I agree with you that there is a natural aristocracy among men. The grounds of this are virtue and talents. . . . May we not even say, that that form of government is the best, which provides the most effectually for a pure selection of these natural aristoi into the offices of government?

. . . And had another [law] which I prepared been adopted by the legislature, our work would have been com-

plete. It was a bill for the more general diffusion of learning. This proposed to divide every county into wards of five or six miles square, like your townships; to establish in each ward a free school for reading, writing, and common arithmetic; to provide for the annual selection of the best [students] from these schools, who might receive, at the public expense, a higher degree of education at a district school; and from these district schools to select a certain number of the most promising [students], to be [educated] at an University, where all the most useful sciences should be taught. Worth and genius would thus have been sought out from every condition of life, and completely prepared by education for defeating the competition of wealth and birth for public trusts.

7. Write a thorough critique of Connolly's essay, explaining everything important needing explanation (Why *blueprint*? Why *Silver Age*? Why *the ideal of inhabiting a continuous present*?). Where do Connolly's judgments of America seem true, where untrue? What license may you allow exaggeration? What of his attitude and his prose? Your aim will be to give an accurate description of his essay and his views, plus a judgment of them. But start from a thesis that expresses your judgment.

8. Write a research paper based on some issue raised by any of the essays in this book. Your problem will be essentially the same as that in an essay built of your own ideas alone: you will find yourself a thesis and then lay it out in an essay with beginning, middle, and end. But you will go beyond your own speculations as you document and challenge your thesis with what others have said. Pick some controversial topic, with much said on both sides, and make up your mind about where you stand. Contrary to common misconception, it is better to go into your researching with your own thesis (or hypothesis) clearly in mind, your own side chosen. Write yourself out a thesis before you begin. Doing so will clarify your thought. But your mind need not be closed. As you read into the *pro's* and *con's* of the matter, you may modify your thesis—or even switch to the other side. With no thesis beforehand, though, your mind may be too wide open for anything to stick.

Your thesis drafted, your reading done, and your notes taken, write an introductory paragraph, with thesis funneled at the end

of it, and then proceed to set up your *con*'s and to knock them down with your *pro*'s. You will be writing your own argument, simply quoting and citing the arguments of others as you present your case.

Here are some suggested theses to attack or support:

- (a) Federal aid to our colleges means creeping dictatorship.
- (b) The cure for juvenile crime begins at home.
- (c) The American press is unfair to Russian justice: the trial of Francis Gary Powers and U-2 reconnaissance, 1960.
- (d) The Peace Corps cannot teach democracy.
- (e) Schweitzer's Lambaréné does little permanent good.
- (f) The critics misunderstand *Webster III*.
- (g) Euthanasia conflicts with Schweitzer's "Reverence for Life."
- (h) Racial desegregation by force denies democratic rights.
- (i) The Puritans were right in suppressing Christmas.
- (j) The Marshall Plan saved Europe for socialism.

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Sheridan Baker

The Essayist

By the author of THE PRACTICAL STYLIST

